

Bascom Clarke

Southern Refugee

Charles E. Whelan

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Alone with God and Poverty.

BASCOM CLARKE

The Story of a Southern Refugee

By
CHARLES E. WHELAN

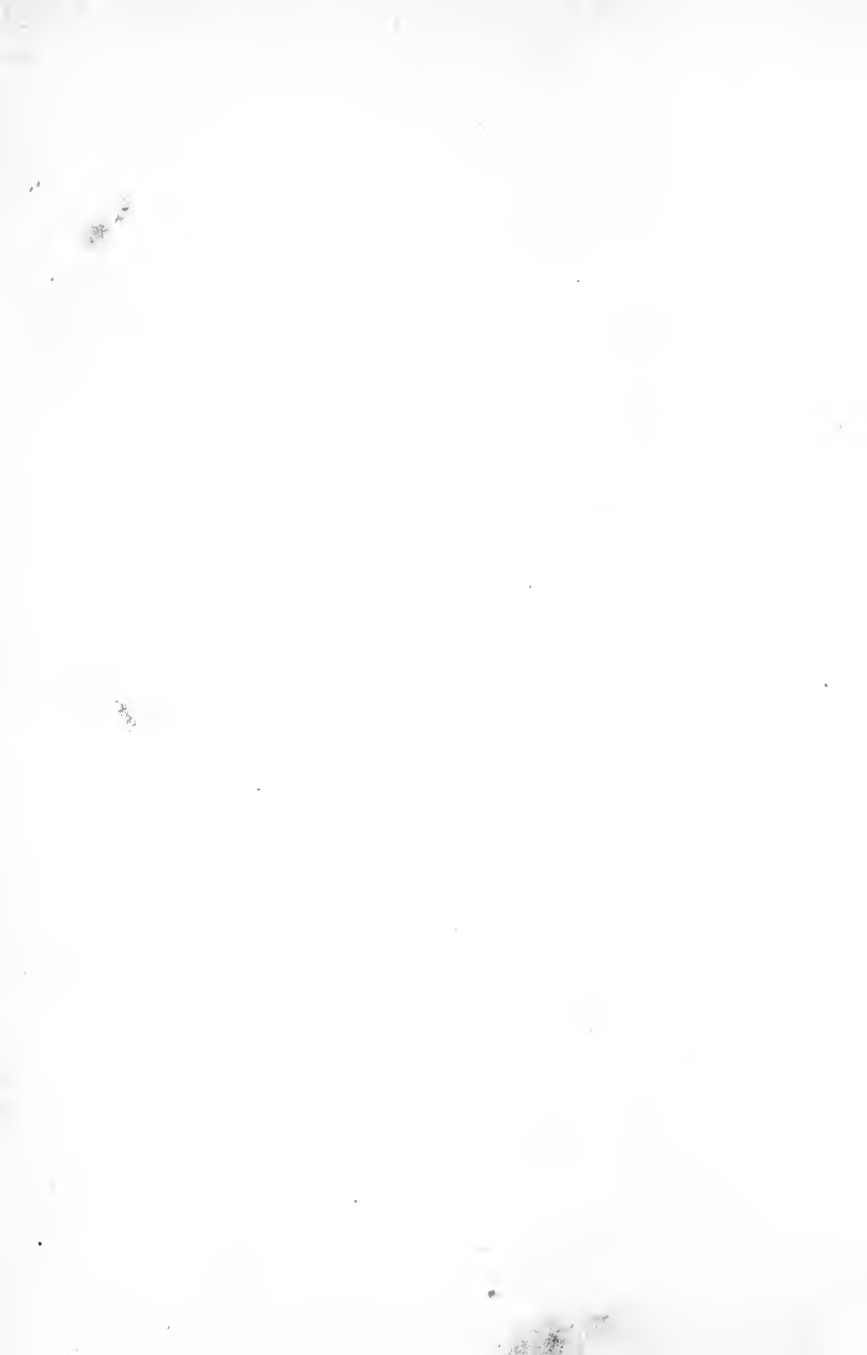


Frontispiece by
GEORGE W. FRENCH

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TO THE MEMORY OF HARRIET NOBLE, WHOSE
MOTHERLY AFFECTION WAS BESTOWED UPON
THE REFUGEE, AND WHOSE SWEET AND GEN-
TLE NATURE SEEMED LIKE A BENEDICTION.



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Some time ago, Mr. Clarke started to write the story of his life under the title, "The Refugee Boy." He had dictated quite a bit of material when, by reason of its extreme personal character, he stopped. I rescued that manuscript and, using the information therein obtained, added to it other facts gathered from him by conversation. I visited the scene of his Indiana life and conversed with the people to gain new viewpoints of the influences surrounding his growth from boyhood to manhood. No fictitious name has been used where it was possible to obtain the real one. By reason of close intimacy with him I knew his personal characteristics, and this volume is largely a search for the environment and influences which have made him what he is. If I have accomplished this in any degree, and at the same time have made the story to any extent as entertaining to others as it was to me, I shall be satisfied. I have used his own language wherever possible, because of his original and trenchant way of putting things as well as to get his survey of conditions and results. Thus, it is his story run through my mill and the toll of pleasure I have received has abundantly repaid the time and effort spent.

CHARLES E. WHELAN.

Madison, Wis., August 10, 1913.

AN APOLOGY

For years I contemplated publishing the incidents of my early life in book form, especially during that period when the nation's fate was at stake and I, an orphan, alone with God and poverty, found myself in the land of my country's enemies, who proved such good friends that through their acts, a "reconstructed rebel," whose soul had been filled with treason and hatred, came to cast his first vote for the Hero of Appomattox.

While away from business cares a few years ago in California, I prepared from memory—a family trait of many generations—manuscript containing many incidents of my life, which I had intended publishing under a *nom de plume*, and which, stripped of Mr. Whelan's sugar-coating, are absolutely true. After completing the manuscript, two facts presented themselves: The story, to be of interest, could not be disguised, the identity of the subject must needs be disclosed. This would have made it of so personal a nature that I abandoned the idea. Submitting the manuscript for Mr. Whelan's consideration, he took possession of it and insisted on clothing it in the uniform of a story, instead of a narrative of events.

I promised the Two Little Sisters—all that are left of that once large and happy family—that through them, the first five hundred copies should be presented to the Daughters of the Confederacy. The second five hundred copies are reserved for the survivors of the Third Michigan Cavalry, whose gallant boys escorted me to the Union

lines at DeValls Bluff, Arkansas, in '64, and the survivors of the Second Indiana Battery who accompanied me as far as Cairo on Farragut's gunboats, and thence to Indiana, both of whom shared with me their haversacks in the long ago.

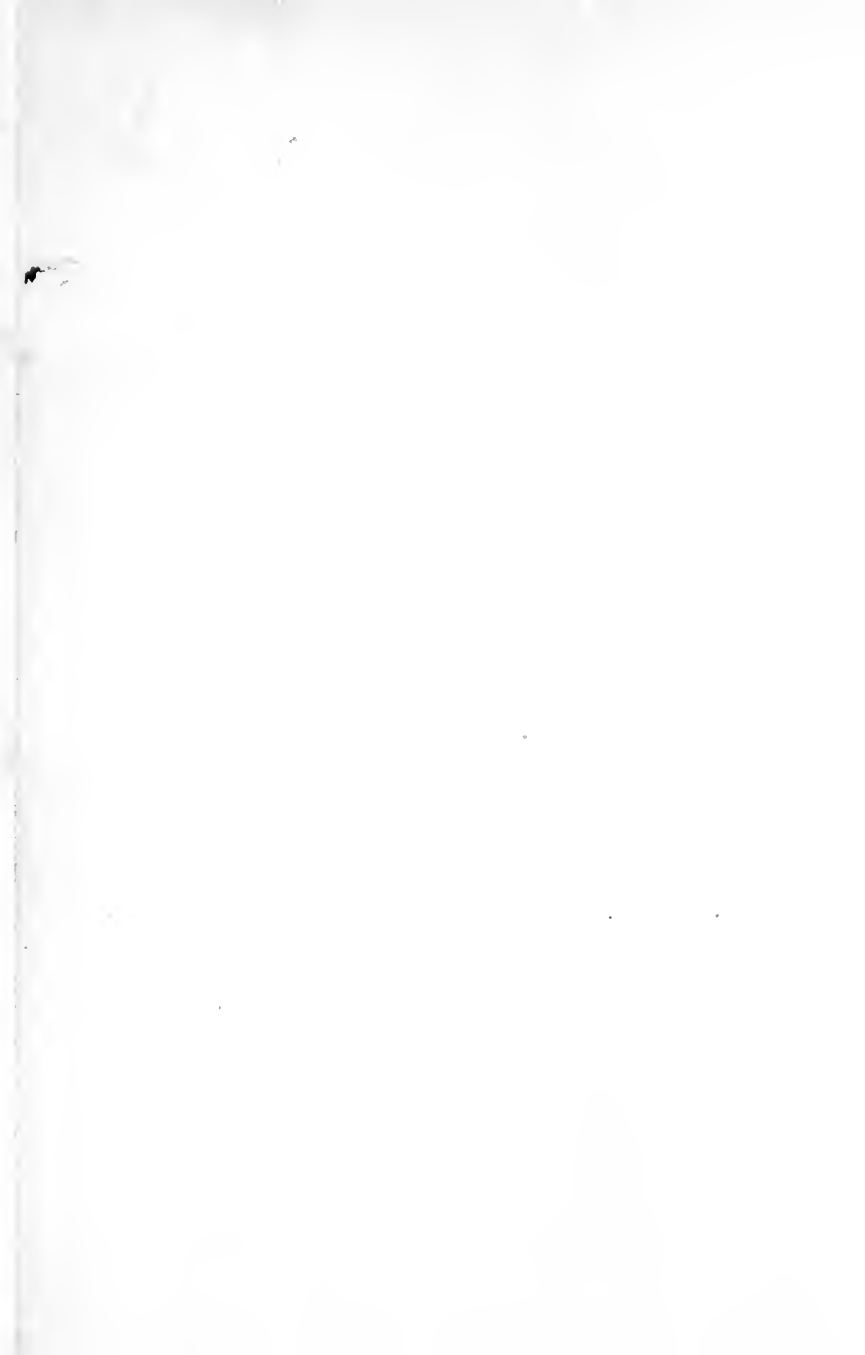
I have experienced some of the trying scenes of war on both sides, and I know something of the price paid in precious lives and priceless treasure to wipe out the curse of slavery. I have watched with much interest the changing of sentiment, from the days of Albion W. Turgee's Fool's Errand, to the days when that matchless orator and southern gentleman, Henry Watterson, in his dedication address, likened Abraham Lincoln unto the Son of Man. I have witnessed the healing of the wounds of the past, so beautifully exemplified on the fiftieth anniversary of Gettysburg, and have in other lands beyond the seas saluted the flag as it waved triumphantly to the breeze, the representative of a reunited nation, without the loss of a single star from its diadem.

BASCOM B. CLARKE.

Madison, Wis., November 1, 1913.

NOTE.—The Colonel Caldwell appearing in the story was in reality Colonel Kellogg, the refugee boy having wrongfully caught the name.

BASCOM CLARKE



BASCOM CLARKE

CHAPTER I.

Thompson's Landing was filled with interest, for the Clarkes were going "west." It was in old Virginia, "be-fo' the war." For generations the Clarke family had held a prominent place in all the affairs of the town and state, and seemed as much a part of the country as the soil itself. Thus the determination to move was an event, not only to those who were to break the old home ties, but to the community of which these people had been a part.

Colonel Clarke bore a title granted him by the Governor of Virginia for services in connection with the Lexington Military Academy, in which he had been an instructor after receiving his education there. He had that dignified military bearing which not only brought him the courtesy of the ordinary citizen, but marked him in the eyes of the stranger as a man of distinguished characteristics. But even the Colonel was compelled to stand in the shadow of Grandfather Clarke, a veteran of the War of 1812.

In that war "Grandfather," as he was known to everybody in the village, had marched, bivouacked and fought side by side with his brother Americans of the North, never dreaming of the time when there should be an arraignment of the one against the other in bloody fratricidal strife. To this influence probably may be traced the strong union sentiment which obtained in the Clarke family even when the fortunes of a part of them were cast with their states on the Confederate side. Having fought side by side with them the old man did not share the common Southern boast that the "Yankees" pos-

sessed a different fighting quality than the "Johnnies" Had there been as many veterans of the War of 1812, at that time, as there were of the Civil War later, their estimate of each other would not have been left to theory or tradition, but would have been positive beyond doubt. The influence of these men might have stemmed the tidal wave set in motion by designing politicians which resulted in the War of the Rebellion. People can see you better if you are fanning a flame and adding fuel to it than if you are stamping it out to prevent a conflagration. Grandfather Clarke never consented to an array of one section of the country against another under different flags.

The Clarke family held "niggers"—not in the number demanded by a big plantation, but sufficient to the needs of town dwelling people. There was no thought of any great moral wrong in this ownership, either on the part of the owner or the slave. It was a part of a system which had so grown into the lives of the people, that negro servants were as much a part of the home atmosphere as the family itself. In most instances, especially with relation to personal servants, the care and affection bestowed upon them was equal to that given the members of the immediate family. These servants had no idea they were being wrongfully held, nor did they fret under the subjection to their white masters. The little colored boys played with the white boys at their games, and naturally yielded to their young masters. Obedience was given as a matter of course.

Cruelty to a negro slave was no more frequent than cruelty to apprentices under the old bond system of the North. The exaggerated pictures of extreme conditions which inflamed the Northerners could have been duplicated by the pen of Harriet Beecher Stowe in almost any part of New England, where a boy was bound out to a master until he was twenty-one years of age. And that system of bondage then was just as prevalent in the North as the holding of slaves was in the South, although the number of bound apprentices and servants was not as large as the number of slaves in the South. It has been

true in all of the past and probably will be true in all the years to come that all the people can not be trusted with the custody and control of the persons of other people without resulting abuses.

When the makers of the Federal constitution were given the opportunity to do away with slavery in the United States, by so loyal a son of the South as Thomas Jefferson, and rejected it, there can be little wonder that the ordinary people accepted it as a fixture and regulated their entire lives with it as a part, having no thought that in so doing they were wronging anybody. They took a condition as it was given to them, with the sanction of the very makers of the government, and that condition could not be changed afterwards without a reconstruction of the very fabric of social and civic life.

"Old Sol" and "Aunt Louise," though slaves, considered themselves just as much a part of the Clarke family as any other members; and in fact, if it were given to either of them to choose, they would have considered themselves of so much importance that the family could not properly exist without them. And, on the other hand, the family would have been lost in a hopeless maze of confusion had these two colored people suddenly taken it into their heads to decamp. But they had grown up in the household and the "Cunnel" and the "Missus" were to them the wisest people on earth, "exceptin', of course, the old Marse and Missus," now known all around as Grandfather and Grandmother Clarke, by whom they had been raised, and from whom they came down to the possession of the Colonel.

This was the atmosphere in which Bascom Clarke began his existence. He was six years old when the family finally came to the decision to move. His father, the Colonel, was a surveyor, and the Grandfather, holding a land warrant from the government for services in the War of 1812, decreed that they would go to the great state of Texas, obtain his tract of land and make a new home. The Colonel would find much to do in his profession and the children would have a greater opportunity than they

could possibly have in the Old Dominion. It was in the days when fathers did not lose their place entirely with the growth to manhood of the son, and the son did not refuse to respect the wishes of his father simply because he had grown beyond his legal right to dictate. Besides, the plan was attractive and gave great promise.

To the older folk the move was a serious matter, one to be measured and calculated for, but to the children it was a frolic. A long, long journey overland through a strange country would be in the nature of a holiday excursion, with no thought on their part of a burden of responsibility carried by the elders.

Little Bascom literally grew fat on the excitement of preparation. He was here, there and everywhere, underfoot this moment and not to be found the next, grabbed out from under the horses' hoofs and put in a place of safety only to be narrowly rescued from the wheels of the wagon. It would be about this time that the grandmother would call:

"Bascom Clarke, come heah this instant!"

And Bascom would go. The grandmother was never disobeyed. She had so ruled her own household that immediate and unquestioned obedience was given her by everybody. Even Grandfather, an old school master, used as he was to guiding the wayward and impatient youth through the mazes of "readin', writin' and 'rithmetic" with the aid of a stout hickory stick, never thought of going contrary to the mandate of his spouse. She was a woman born and bred to rule, and yet so gentle and sympathetic as to be universally beloved. Her rare judgment was appealed to in all the problems of the family, while in sickness no one in all the community could equal her in nursing the stricken one. Had she been a man she might have been one of Virginia's contributions to the presidency of the nation, but, being a woman, she was content with the loving homage of her family and friends and the opportunity to influence the community toward right things. She was intensely devout, saturated with the word and spirit of the Bible, and believed in teaching

children the lessons which the Good Book contains. And they learned verses and chapters from the beginning of Genesis to the last of Revelations, not only her own children but her children's children, and even her slaves.

This grandmother, practically all the time and particularly at this time of confusion, took personal charge of Bascom while she watched the detail of all that was going on, now and then giving directions. Her heart was already touched with homesickness as she noted the old family property, too heavy or cumbersome to take, pass under the hammer, and realized that she was seeing the last of her girlhood's and young wifehood's estate. Yet she jealously guarded and shielded the little lad and had time to amuse him in her own way. She told him stories, most of them, it is true, being narratives plucked from the Bible, but she invested them with a charm and romance which made them vividly interesting.

The morning of departure came. The night before everything had been put into the wagons except the last few things. Notwithstanding the earliness of the hour nearly the entire population of the village of Thompson's Landing was on hand to give parting cheer to the Clarkes. More than one eye was dimmed with moisture and the tears streamed down Grandmother's cheeks. The day before had been especially hard for her. Realizing the probability that never again would she see the little town which had been to her a home for so long, and appreciating the fact that she was meeting for the last time those people of whose lives she had been a part, many of whom had been her girlhood friends, she choked up with her emotion. Little Bascom looked on with wonderment at her. He climbed into her lap and put his arms around her neck, trying in his way to assuage her grief. She hugged him close to her and smoothing his hair back she said:

"You don't understand, honey. You don't understand, but sometime maybe you will."

And years afterwards he looked heavenward, as he saw in his memory the white-haired old lady's face, and softly said:

“Yes, oh, yes! I understand.”

As many of the family as could be were placed in the carryall. These included the women and smaller children with the Colonel driving the two big bay horses. The only other rig was the heavy canvas-covered lumber wagon, drawn by two mules. In this were the provisions, cooking utensils, clothing, bedding and such things as were not sold because of their intimate association with the family. Uncle Sol and Aunt Louise were in charge of this latter rig, the former riding the near mule and the latter occupying the seat in front where she could give her “ol’ nigger man” the benefit of her superior feminine knowledge of how he should conduct himself.

As the road wound around on a curve all turned to take a last look at the old familiar scenes. As they did so a little black figure was noted plowing along in the dust of the middle of the road quite a ways back, but following. Bascom was the first to discover the identity of the pedestrian:

“It’s Sammy, Grandmother! It’s Sammy!”

Sammy was one of the little slaves with whom Bascom used to play, and who was as devoted as a squire to his knight.

The teams were halted and waited until the little fellow came up.

“Let him in, Grandma! Let him in!” cried Bascom.

“No, Bascom, he can’t come. He doesn’t belong to us.”

“Yes, he does! Ain’t he always belonged to us? He’s my sorrel horse, Grandma, and I want him here with me. Come on, Sammy!”

He jumped up and down and wriggled to get free to join his playmate, who, by this time, was up with the wagons, a most forlorn and pitiable object. Great tears had been running down his face and mingling with the dust of the highway. His general dejected appearance would have been amusing to the older ones did it not denote one of the eternal tragedies of life, separation.

“No, honey,” said Grandma, “He can’t come with us. He isn’t our nigger any more and he must go back.”

"But I want him, Grandma," and the boy broke down at the thought of leaving him behind. "I ain't got nobody to drive, an' there ain't nobody min's the rein like he does. Let him come."

"No, son," said the Colonel. "He doesn't belong to us and we can't take him." Then, turning to Sammy, he told him he must go back. He did it kindly and with a sympathy in his voice, but with a firmness which left no doubt that the action was final. The pickaninny looked at his young "marse" with mournful eyes, and Bascom screamed with anguish, which all the efforts of his grandmother failed to check. The Colonel spoke again, the black boy slowly turned and made his way down the road toward town and the cavalcade again took up its long journey. It was hours before Bascom could be brought to a cheerful mood. He continually called for Sammy, until at last he fell asleep. The Grandmother kissed the tear-stained cheeks and held the boy closely in her arms.

"He don' understand," she said, "and sometime I feel that I don' understand, either. But 'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.' What I don't understand I leave to him."

The Colonel spoke up:

"It will be solved some day, Mother, and, as you say, in God's own time, but it's going to take a surgical operation by a Master Hand to do it. God grant that in the operation the country may survive. The man up North who is demanding emancipation of the blacks can't know conditions nor measure consequences. To thrust these people into immediate freedom without adequate guardianship, those who have never known responsibility, who have never carried an independent burden, would result in chaos, confusion and as near an approach to hell as it is possible to imagine. With ages of barbarism and centuries of slavery as their only environment he who expects them to qualify for an important part in the civilization of the world, without preliminary training and long guiding of their feet in the right road, is visionary indeed."

“Yes, James, I know,” responded the Grandmother, “but if the time is comin’ when the system which we-all have had with us in the South for all our days shall be changed, isn’t it the duty of all of us to do what we can to prepare these people for that change? They are nothin’ but children and should be treated as such. I thank God that no niggah of mine has failed to be taught right living. Take Solomon and Louise there in the other wagon. I have had the trainin’ of them nearly all my life. The fact that there was a deed which conveyed them to me as property did not lessen my duty to them, and I have tried to teach them integrity and morality. You wouldn’t say they could not take their place as free people and not be an influence for right living. No! You may say they are the exception. That may be true. But, if so, is not that the fault of the people who have had the custody and control of these people all these years? If environment is the thing which counts, we who create the environment for them are responsible if it be not such as tends toward cleanly lives.”

Just then little Bascom awoke and called for Sammy.

CHAPTER II.

Night had fallen in the Cumberland mountains, after a long, hard day's drive, most of the way up hill. Everybody was tired, for all who could had walked a large part of the way to ease the load on the horses. On either side of the road was a dense and seemingly impenetrable forest, with an occasional break where some mountain stream crossed the way. The great wood-clad domes so shut in the valley that the sun was lost long before time for the day to close. Hence, when a clearing was found which would make a good camping place it was nearly dark. Aunt Louise kindled a fire and went back to a creek they had just crossed to get water for the coffee. Uncle Sol unhitched the horses and cared for them. The grandfather and the Colonel unhitched the mules and staked them out for the night. The women folks got out the bedding and made it ready. The children ran about in play, the older ones helping with the preparations. Each was so busy that it was some time before Mrs. Clarke turned from her work and said:

“Why, where is Aunt Louise?”

Sure enough the fire was going and the cooking things there at hand but the old colored woman was nowhere to be found. They called to her and, receiving no answer, a hasty search was made in the direction of the stream to which she had gone, but no trace of her could be found. Darkness was coming on rapidly and soon the shadows were so deep that it was impossible to see ahead any great distance. A few mountaineers' cabins scattered along were the only human habitations passed during the day and the possibility of finding the woman in such a wilderness seemed remote indeed. Grandfather took the old flint-lock musket which he carried in the War of 1812 and made a detour of the camp, continually calling and now

and then firing the gun. Colonel Clarke took the big Colt's revolver and followed in a still wider circle. Both came back with no news. Some mountaineers who had been attracted by the camp and drawn also by the shots, joined in the general search which was prosecuted all night, each man keeping as closely in touch with his neighbor as possible, but all effort failed. At daybreak she was still missing.

A hasty supper had been prepared by the women folk. The elders ate but little in their worriment, but the children developed a hunger fully as strong as usual. Then they were put to bed and soon forgot all their troubles. While the men hunted the two Madames Clarke kept vigil around the campfire. When the grandfather and the Colonel reached the camp after one of their tours, tired and discouraged, Grandmother dropped to her knees and prayed the Father to protect the servant and restore her to them. It was the eloquent prayer of absolute faith, and out there in the solitude of the mountains, where the grandeur and majesty of God's handiwork were on every hand, and where it seemed human effort must be unavailing, each felt the inspiration of the great silence. As the prayer of this good woman was lifted up, the sincerity and helplessness of the appeal must move the Infinite Power to come, and, indeed, they could almost feel the touch of the Comforter. Her voice was broken with the sobs of her great emotion and the tears streamed down her cheeks. None could doubt either her faith in God or her love for her servant. When she arose from her knees she simply said:

"God is good!"

Uncle Sol, dazed by the calamity which had befallen his helpmeet, and not knowing what to do, did nothing but walk up and down and wring his hands. He got up from his knees after the prayer and shouted:

"Praise de Lawd!"

When day broke the search was prosecuted with renewed vigor. The horses were mounted and parties went in every direction. But still no sign of the lost one. Sud-

denly, from the direction of the creek, there came Auntie with a pail of water in her hand and another on her head. Mother Clarke was the first to reach her and the water flew in all directions as she hugged her. Then everybody made a rush and she was hugged and kissed. Even the Colonel and Grandfather put their arms around her and told her how glad they were that she had been restored to them. The children climbed into her arms by turns and clung to her skirts.

"Bress de Lawd! Bress de Lawd!" she said. "Bress de Lawd! I's foun' my folks!"

The signal guns were fired and from far and near came the searching parties. They all pressed her for her story, but she said:

"I ain't got time to tell you-all now. I's got to get breakfast right away."

Both the grandmother and mother told her to rest, that they would get the meal, but she would not have it. Her place was at the fire and she wouldn't have the "missesses" spoiling their hands with the cooking. So she set to work, and such a meal as was served to the tired party: bacon, fried apples, coffee and white bread. When it was ready all knelt while Grandmother lifted her voice in a prayer of thanksgiving. Her deep earnestness affected everyone, and Auntie would break in with:

"Bress de Lawd! Bress de Lawd!"

When breakfast was over and the preparations were made for moving on, the old colored woman told her story:

"Af'r I got de water I foun' some chink nuts [chinquabins] an' I fought dey would be fin' foh de chillen. An' den I stopped to get 'em, an' af'r I'd picked 'em, I tu'ned 'roun' an' de creek wan't whah I left it. An' I hunted an' hunted, an' couldn't fin' it. An' I kept huntin' an' huntin', an' it got dahk, an' I got scaihed. Den I run dis way an' den I run dat way, an' bimeby I knowed I was los'. An' I kep' goin' tell mah laigs wouldn't go no mo'. An' I fell down 'side a log. An' I was scaihed de bears an' painters 'd git me. An' den I 'membered ol' missus used to read to us outen de Bible dat de Lawd

was always wid us, an' I prayed an' prayed an' prayed. I said, 'Oh, Lawd, I bin los' an' I can't fin' mah folks, an' I's scaihed, an' I's run an' run an' run, an' I can't run no mo', an' I's tiyud out, an' dere ain't nobody can do nuffin foh me 'cept You. An' You-all know mah ol' missus, an' I wants to fin' huh, an' I can't fin' her 'less You-all 'll show me how. I know You-all know my ol' missus, Lawd, 'cause she talks to yuh ebery day. It's de Clarke folks I wan' tuh fin', Lawd, an' dey is quality folk from ol' Vi'ginny, an' dey is somewhah on de road, an' dey am camped foh de night. An' I must fin' 'em, Lawd, 'cause dey-all won't have nothin' to eat outen I get dah. An' dey need me, Lawd, an' I needs dem, an' we-all needs each udder. An' my ol' niggah man, Solomon, he needs me, 'cause he jes' nach'ly mek a ol' fool o' hisse'f ef I ain't dah to tek cayah o' hem. An' I aint' got nowhah to go, Lawd, an' I don't know what to do, so You-all 'll hev to tell me. Foh missus' sake fin' me, Lawd, 'cause I'm los' an' she worry 'bout me, an' I wants my folks, Amen.' An' den I felt jes' laik I'd et er meal o' vittles, an' I laid down 'side de log an' went to sleep."

"But didn't you hear the guns, Aunty?" some one asked.

"Yess, dem shootin' an' bangin' kep' wakin' me up all de time, an' I was scaihed tell I 'membered de Lawd wuz doin' things to fin' me, an' I wanted to give Him time. Didn't He have to go an' fin' whah my folks was, an' den fin' how I twisted 'roun' in de woods befoh He came back to show me de way out? I guess dis ol' niggah woman got some min' yet. He jes' nach'ly tol' me tuh go tuh sleep an' wait tell mornin', an' den He'd see about it. An' den, when de mawnin' was heah, an' I knowed I'd have tuh get breakfast foh yuh-all, an' I jes' let de Lawd tell me which way tuh go, an' I wasn't 'cited, noh scaihed, an' I jes' walked back tell I foun' de buckets, an' got some fresh watah an' come home. Dat's all."

And who shall say that the prayer of this simple minded slave woman, joined with the prayer of her mistress for

her safety, did not move the Almighty to intervene, protect her and bring her back to her people?

The wagons were packed and after bidding the friendly mountaineers good-bye, with many expressions of gratitude to them for their help, the wagons creaked along the mountain road again toward the west. Aunt Louise, proud beyond measure of the stir she had created and the importance she had acquired by her experience, occupied her place on the front seat of the wagon, and proceeded to make Uncle Sol feel his insignificance by her comments.

"Why didn't yuh-all come an' git me, 'stead o' lettin' me stay out dah in de woods all night?" was her first shot.

"Why," quavered Sol, from the back of the near mule, "Why, I didn't know whah yuh-all was, an' I didn't know whah to go."

"Yuh-all didn't cayuh, dat's all. Me outen dah in de woods tellin' de Lawd all about yuh, an' yuh-all jes' havin' a good time! Dat's what comes o' mawyin' a Ca'olina niggah anyhow. Dey nevah hev no sense."

Silence from the driver.

"Why didn't yuh-all come lookin' fer me, laik yuh did when yuh was courtin'? Ain't I as good foh yuh now as I was den? Prob'ly yuah min' was on some o' dem yaller gals back dah, an' yuh didn't cayuh 'f I nevah got back, er 'f I was all et up by dem varmints."

"Why, Louise," began Solomon.

"Don't talk back to me, niggah! I know yuh-all too well. I specks yuh went 'roun' dah las' night wid a long face, an' made 'em all think yuh was mou'nin'. Yuh-all am jes' waitin' fuh me tuh die, dat's what yuh is, an' I knows it."

"Dey's one thing shuah," retorted Sol from his vantage point, "yuh-all tongue'll be runnin' foh a long time afteh yuh is dead, an' if it spits ez much fiah den ez it do now dey may make a mistake as to which place dey take yuh!"

It was a good thing for Solomon that he was far enough away from Louise to prevent her reaching him, after this dose of cannister. So she changed her tactics, and used the usual woman's weapon of tears.

“Yass, I knowed it. Dat shows yuh-all don’ cayuh ’f I’m livin’ or dead, an’ I ben doin’ everything foh yuh all dese yeahs,” she sobbed. “I wish de beahs ’d et me up. Dat’s what I do. Bein’ los’ all night, an’ den come back tuh be ’bused,” and she wailed and rocked herself back and forth in her grief.

Of course this was more than Solomon could stand, and he began to pacify her as best he could, realizing that his last speech was rather beyond the bounds of gallantry. It was seldom he turned, but when Aunt Louise got started on one of her talking streaks, with him as the object of attack, she usually kept on until he fired red hot shot in retaliation. Then they spent hours in patching up. Usually he kept silence, scarcely commenting on his action, either in defense or explanation. She would keep up a run of musket fire until she happened to hit him in some exposed part, and then he would respond with artillery. Then the soothing balm would be applied to her injured feelings.

“Did I tell yuh, Louise, dat de Kunnel said I could get yuh a new dress when we got to Nashville, honey?” he asked.

“I don’t want no new dress,” was the sulky response.

“An’ it’s goin’ to be red, and have yaller ribbons to fly all ’round on it,” continued Sol.

“De Kunnel nevah said it,” slowly came forth.

“An’ when yuh have hit on jes’ think how proud I’ll be when we walk down de street in de face ob dat po’ white trash an’ Tennessee niggahs.”

“When we gwine ter get to Nashville, Solomon?”

CHAPTER III.

When camp was made one night, on a bold promontory above the White River, it was little thought by any that they had reached the end of their journey. Texas was still a long ways off, and they were in the wilds of Arkansas. All day long they had been following the bends of the river, now on the bottoms and then on the highlands where the river wound below them like a great silver ribbon. Some of the waterways of the world are more famous for their scenery, and yet none can excel for majestic sweep and picturesque shore the White of Arkansas. And especially was this true in the time before the war, and before the heavy forests had given way to the woodsman's axe. More than once that day, when the horses had been stopped for a breathing spell, the travelers had been inspired to exclaim at the picture spread at their feet. As night came on a fit place was found for camp under some wide-spreading trees. Good grazing was near for the animals, and a little stream tumbling down hill to the river furnished water.

Aunty had lighted her fire, and the coffee pot was already yielding its rich perfume when there came two quick shots echoing from tree to tree and a magnificent deer fell dead in the very midst of the campers. Before they could recover from their surprise there came tearing out of the woods the following hunter. Somewhat taken back at finding the place occupied by people he nevertheless was possessed of native gentility. Reining in his horse he took off his hat and said:

"I shot a buck; but I reckon I didn't get him!"

"I reckon you did," responded the Colonel. "There he is."

The stranger dismounted, and going up to the party extended his hand to the colonel:

"I am Bob Crockett, suh, grandson of old Davy Crockett. I live close by here, and I would be delighted to have you-all as my company while you stay."

"And my name is Clarke, suh," answered the Colonel, warmly accepting the greetings, "Colonel James F. Clarke, from Vuhginyuh, and we are on our way to Texas."

"Bob" was then presented to the rest of the family, and from this casual meeting there sprang a friendship which lasted so long as there was alive a Crockett or a Clarke. Who had not heard of Davy Crockett and his tragic defense of the Alamo? And here was his grandson, not only righteously proud of his lineage but a fit representative of the stock. Strong, lithe, supple, with a frank, genial personality, in an instant he not only had the admiration but the confidence of all.

Although the Colonel demurred at burdening him with the family, Crockett pressed his hospitality with such eager earnestness that in a short time his invitation was accepted and the prospect of again feeling floor boards under the feet and sleeping in real beds put everybody in god humor.

Bob Crockett's home was not a pretentious affair, but that it was the abode of happiness and hospitality was apparent the moment the party entered. Few men would have the temerity to impose upon his house unannounced such a party as Bob took into his home that night. But "Aunt Mollie," as she came to be known afterwards by the Clarkes, added a welcome to that of her husband which left no doubt of its genuineness in the minds of her guests. Bob's mother, a splendid type of well preserved American womanhood, joined her daughter-in-law in the courtesies of the occasion, and took to her particular charge Grandmother Clarke, thus beginning a friendship which lasted so long as they were alive.

While Bob was not rich he owned a good farm and enough hands to work it, but to a man with his nervous energy the life of a planter would be too tame. He had been well educated, and especially trained for the law,

which profession he was supposed to follow and in which he would have made a success had he devoted his time and energy to it. But he filled his life so full of all the affairs of the community that he had little time to devote either to his plantation or his profession.

It is true that he had served as public prosecutor and by his relentless administration of that office became a terror to evil doers. This office, however, was a political position and came to him as Bob Crockett the politician rather than Bob Crockett the lawyer, although he was especially qualified to fill it from a professional standpoint and as a lover of law and order. His heart went into all work he did, and while he would prosecute with vigor, and his fiery eloquence would cause the offenders to cringe and writhe, yet he was the first to extend a helping hand to the one who really evinced a desire to reform and lead a correct life. It was told of him in later life that he had obtained a verdict of guilty against a man who, during a quarrel, had shot and killed another, and the prisoner was given a year in jail. Bob, becoming convinced afterwards that the man had acted in self defense, secured his pardon on his own recommendation. When the war broke out this man was one of the first to enlist in Bob's regiment and fought under him during the contest between the states.

The mental picture, which unconsciously comes to all, of Davy Crockett, the pioneer—rough, hard and powerful of physique—was not borne out in the descendant. Bob was slender in figure, dapper in vesture, and with feet so small he could wear his wife's shoes without difficulty. In his younger days he had run for a time under rather a reckless head of steam, but had been converted through the ministrations of a circuit rider whose force, logic and earnestness had brought Bob up standing face to face with his duty and responsibility to God and his fellow men. Nothing was ever done half way by Bob, once he started, and following his conversion he was wont often to use his splendid intellect and eloquence as a lay preacher.

Though affable and gentle as a woman under ordinary circumstances, he was a veritable flame of passion when aroused. He would follow an enemy implacably and indefatigably, but would reach out his hand in forgiveness at the first show of amends. Everybody respected him, and those who were privileged to get close to him loved him. The humblest and blackest negro in the community would have crawled on his hands and knees to serve Bob Crockett and considered himself blessed of God to have the privilege, while the wealthiest planter in Arkansas was honored to call him his friend. His advice was sought and freely given on every sort of problem that comes to either individual or community in a place like Mount Adams. He knew more life stories, and had helped to solve more complex situations than is usually given to one man. Whether it was love, business or political affairs which needed adjustment, the appeal usually got to him in the last analysis at least.

He was a walking encyclopedia on nearly every topic on which information was desired. His wide experience, broad reading, keen observation and quick intuition made him indeed a fit court of last resort. He was equally adept at determining the value of a hand in poker or passing upon the relative merits of the Old and New Testaments. He could run a horse race to the satisfaction of all concerned and conduct a Sunday school with all the dignity and reverence of the sincere and devout man he was. He could fight a duel if the provocation were sufficient or sit by the bedside of a sick man and with tender, sympathetic touch alleviate the pain. He could discourse with the learned stranger on the philosophy of Socrates or the proper translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics or tell the little boy how to fashion his kite so that it would fly. He could write a dissertation on political economy with one hand and tickle a baby into merry laughter with the other.

Money to him was valuable only as a rapidly circulating medium for the benefit of others. Generous to a fault, he was quick to resent imposition when it became ap-

parent to him, but just as prone to fall for the same game when the next appeal was made. He had no use for a whiner, but his help went to the person in hard luck before it was asked. This is the kind of a man who had quickly measured the quality of the Clarkes and extended to them the hospitality of his home.

On the broad chimney, above the fireplace, the place of honor in a Southern manor, hung an old flint-lock rifle. It was Davy Crockett's "Betsy," the gun which is intimately associated with the pioneer life of the old scout and Indian fighter. It was taken down, passed around and admired by the guests, and the prowess and character of its former distinguished owner commented upon. The elder Mrs. Crockett had known "Davy" well, and her story of his life and deeds, told then and afterwards in the presence of Bascom, made a lasting impression on him. This was the time when the stories of border life and Indian warfare, fresh in the minds of their immediate ancestors, were told the children by the older folk and written into harrowing tales read with avidity by both old and young.

In the evening, "Bob" Crockett, the Colonel and the Grandfather talked long and earnestly, the first of the possibilities in that immediate region and the last two of their hopes on leaving Virginia for the West.

"Why go to Texas?" asked Bob. "Right heah is just as good land as you can find out doors, I reckon, and it can be had from the government for the asking. You are a surveyor, Colonel, and there's not a better spot for a town than on this bluff. You can see there is a natural place for a landing down there, and the city will be located far enough up so that high water will not affect it. This river is navigable all the year and there is plenty of cotton to go down and plenty of supplies to go back. This place ought to be as good a location as any on the river. Take a day or two off from your journey and look around and I believe you will not go farther."

The next day and the next and two or three others were spent in looking over th field, with the result that the

Clarke family settled. They took up their government claims and purchased still more land with the gold that Grandfather had obtained from the sale of his government warrants earned by him in the national military service.

Mount Adams, as the place was called, began to thrive, in fact it had a boom. Corner lots in the business district brought good prices, and soon a dry goods "emporium," a grocery store and refreshment stand combined, a ten pin alley and "grocery" opened for business. Boats stopped at the landing to discharge their cargoes on the up-trip and take on their load of cotton and produce returning. There was plenty of work for everybody, with the usual proviso that no one ever did anything a "nigger" could do. All the rough labor and much that required even higher skill was done by the slaves.

The town seemed destined to a stable and prosperous future. With its rapid growth there came as the usual natural accompaniment of those days gambling, horse-racing for high stakes, and some of the grosser evils found in the wake of sporadic prosperity. While churches were built it must be admitted that they had meager attendance although liberally supported. There was no public school. Such a thing as that was scarcely known at that time in the South. Not even a private school found a place among the enterprises of the village for several years. Each family was supposed to look after the education of its own members. And the necessity for education did not then appeal to these people as it would in the present day. All round them were examples of men who had made money with scarcely any book knowledge. They had learned to read and to figure, and shrewdness in business matters counted more than mental training. The plantations were little kingdoms, and were measured by the number of "niggers" it took to run them.

Saturday afternoon was the time for a general meeting of the planters of the neighborhood. Every available hitching post was occupied, most of them with saddle

horses, a few with pretentious rigs when the women folk vouchsafed that they would come into town to do a little shopping and gossiping on that day. Nearly every plantation had some fine racing stock in its stables, and the merits of each was known throughout all the country. Once in a while a new horse with fast proclivities would be brought into the neighborhood, and immediate and genuine interest was shown in its possible speed. The favorites were backed liberally and those who sought to wrest their honors from them were usually compelled to do it with a good fat bank roll as a condition precedent. Money flowed as freely as the contents of the barrels in the "grocery," where Colonel James Thomas Upshire Hawkins presided.

These Saturday afternoons also furnished a forum for the discussion of politics, not the local affairs which might be disposed of in a breath, but the broad national questions which just then were holding tense the relation between the northern and southern sections of the country. The great gulf of thought and interest which intervened between these two parts of the Union was as well illustrated in this little community as anywhere else. The conservative thinkers were also conservative talkers, except in rare instances, while the hotheaded fire brands spread flames of passion recklessly in every direction.

Hawkins' grocery was usually the scene of the debates, although the word debate can hardly be applied, as the sentiments expressed were nearly always toward one end, though by different routes. Hawkins, between acts of ministering to the thirst of the assembled land barons, would interject a pointed comment which sometimes caused a general laugh at the expense of one or more of the disputants.

"Some day those folks up Nawth 'll fin' out this interferin' with ouah property is mighty serious business," said old Dave Watson, just after the latest news of the congressional discussion then going on had been read from the Memphis paper. "What right have they to tell us now what to do with the niggers? They helped us get

'em in the fust place, an' then because they couldn't use 'em an' we could they want to steal 'em from us by passin' laws that they are to be free."

"They won't set 'em free 'thout a fight," said Wilson, a young planter who, on the death of his father, had succeeded to the possession of a large plantation with about eight hundred slaves. "I'm heah to tell yuh that law or no law they ain't goin' to have my niggers 'cept ovah my dead body, and some of 'em go with me to the kingdom come when I go, too!"

"But I understand the more reasonable of them want to pay for the niggers out o' the national treasury when they set 'em free," said Lawyer Billings.

"Pay foh 'em!" said Wilson, "Pay foh 'em! They ain't 'nough money in the United States treasury to pay foh the niggers. Niggers is niggers in the South. No, suh, they cain't pay foh 'em with money. This thing is either right or it's wrong. If it's right they ain't no right to offer to pay foh 'em, and if it's wrong we ain't no right to keep 'em. An' besides, it's as much ouah money as theirs that they're offerin' to use to buy 'em with."

"Yes," said Hawkins, "It'd be like me tradin' a cod-fish to myse'f foh a sack o' salt an' then throwin' the salt in the rivah."

"No, suh," continued Wilson, "my niggers is my niggers, and they don't belong to the United States and nevah did. I'm livin' in Arkansaw and when we cain't do in Arkansaw with ouah property as we want to without bein' set upon by those outside people who don't know nothin' about it it's time Arkansaw went by herse'f and run things to suit her own people."

This sentiment met with almost unanimous applause.

Just then Bob Crockett and Grandfather Clarke happened along.

"Hello, Bob," some one called out. "Howdy, suh, cap'n," to the old gentleman.

"We've just declared wah, Bob," said another, "an' we want to know whether yuh-all air ready to fight."

"I don' want no wah, and I ain't much on the fight,"

answered Bob, good naturedly, "but who yuh-all goin' to wah with?"

"With the United States of America, by gad, suh," snapped a hotheaded planter who up to this time had not joined in the conversation, having been too busily engaged with the liquids from Hawkins' barrels.

"I'd be sorry to have such a thing occuh, suh," said Bob. "I cain't forget that the United States of America was held pretty high by Grandfather Davy, an' that that same United States of America avenged his death. I'm ready to fight foh her, gentlemen, but I'd hate mightily to have to fight against huh."

"Goin' to takes sides with the damned Yankees, air yuh?" demanded the same hothead, "an' help 'em steal ouah niggers! An' yuh a grandson of ol' Davy Crockett!"

Bob's eyes flashed dangerously as he said quietly:

"I made my statement, gentlemen, as a gentleman, and I stand ready to back it as a gentleman at any time or place or any distance!"

The cooler ones saw the dangerous trend of the conversation and quickly hastened to interfere.

"Jim didn't mean it, Bob. He's a little in liquor and don' know yuh as we do. Let it pass, there's a good fellow. It'll be all right." Then, turning to the offending one, he said under his breath, "Apologize, damn yuh, or we'll all take a shot at yuh. You mout as well say yer prayers as meet Bob Crockett. You'd better get some sense in that addled brain of youah's quick."

The offending one, partially sobered by the earnestness of his adviser, came to enough to mutter something which was taken as sufficient apology, and then lapsed into the next stage of his indisposition and went to sleep.

"I've sometimes wished," put in Grandfather Clarke, who was always listened to with the utmost respect, "I've sometimes wished never a nigger had been brought to this country. They've been the bone of contention continually and have done moh to keep us apart as a people than any other one thing."

"But what would we have done without 'em, Cap'n?"

“That’s mere speculation, of course,” said Grandfather. “But no problem has evah yet been put up to the American people that they could not solve if given time. This country would have been developed south without them just as it has been no’t’h, suh. Of cou’s’e, probably in a different way than it has been with them, but the southern people are just as capable of meeting conditions and getting the best of them as any other people on earth. If some epidemic should wipe out every nigger in the country you’d fin’ the men who are now making use of ’em because they are here would be the first to devise ways of getting along without ’em. You cain’t tell me that a man who has as good a business head as, for instance, Mr. Wilson, heah, couldn’t run his plantation if they wan’t a nigger within a thousand miles—not at first, of cou’s’e, because it would take time to recover from the shock of the change and get readjusted. But he’d rise triumphantly ovah the worst obstacle and you’d fin’ his acres at last yieldin’ their just proportion of wealth.”

“I’d hate tuh do it, suh,” said Wilson, who had been listening to Grandfather, “an’ I thank yuh foh the compliment, but I don’ expect the time will ever come when I won’t have my own hands working my plantation. I’ll fight, suh, an’ it will be a case of the South fightin’ foh her homes and people, and she’ll win.”

“I hope, suh,” continued Grandfather, “that it will not be necessary to go to war and especially against our own people. It would be cruel indeed.”

“Don’t be alarmed, suh,” said Wilson, “they won’t fight. What they got to fight foh? Nothin’ but a passel of niggers they don’t own! What ’ve we got to fight for? Everything! We’ll lick ’em, an’ then they’ll leave us alone.”

“Don’t be too sure, Mr. Wilson, that they’ll stop fightin’ when yuh-all begin. I had some of ’em with me in the Wah of Twelve, an’ when they was fightin’ I couldn’t tell which was a Nawthener and which was a Southener. An’ I’m thinkin’ if evah they gets to goin’ in a real struggle

both sides 'll know they's been a fight. I hope it won't come, suh. God help us if it does."

"An' if it does come both sides will be prayin' to the same God to help 'em win," said Hawkins. "I've often wondered how He's goin' to answer both prayers. If yuh want God to help yuh when yuh-all air fightin' yu'd bettah put nothin' but powder in yuh guns. Yuh can get the noise of conflict an' miss the scene of carnage."

CHAPTER IV.

Old Arkansas was teeming with secession spirit long before any overt act had precipitated the great struggle. The attitude of Abraham Lincoln on the question of slavery had filtered through such prejudiced and impassioned strata that the ordinary people looked upon him as a veritable monstrosity of fanatical bias. In him, according to their view, was concentrated the essence of all that the loudest agitators had ever said on the subject of slavery. And when the problem of remaining with the Union after his election came up to these people they were illy prepared mentally to give it that wise judicial consideration to which it was entitled.

The war spirit was being continually fanned into a fury of flames, and all that was necessary to send the mercury of their mental thermometer soaring high was for some speaker to barely hint at an attack upon the institution of slavery. Conservative men there were, indeed, who counseled delay in any action until at least the new administration had demonstrated by some move its antagonism to the South. But this counsel was swept aside in a cyclone of popular fury, and even the counselors themselves were charged with disloyalty to their state and their people for making such a suggestion.

In the state of Arkansas, as in every other southern state, there were some free negroes. So high was the feeling against emancipated colored people that the Arkansas legislature passed a law giving them a limited time to leave the commonwealth or be returned to slavery. An exodus of free negroes followed, and the pitiful condition of these friendless people as they reached the free states did much to arouse an indignation there, and give excuse at least for much of the intemperate language uttered on that side of the line. In Mount Adams this law was re-

ceived with general expressions of satisfaction. Such men as believed it to be unjust found it useless to argue, and in fact from this time on the man who cried out against the onward sweep of secession spirit jeopardized his property if not his life.

Little part was taken by the Clarkes in the discussion of affairs in Arkansas, for they were newcomers to the state, and felt that they were not sufficiently a part of the people to presume to dictate in local affairs. Both the grandfather and the Colonel were great admirers of Stephen A. Douglas, and felt that his elevation to the presidency would help to avert a conflict, and result in reuniting the people in spirit.

"There is much untamed talk, son," said Grandfather, at the table one day. "Talk that don' sound right to me. They don't talk sense, but just wild and crazy-like. They's some that's even talkin' the 'Empire of Arkansaw.' I hope I'll nevah live to see the day when the ol' flag I fought for will give place anywhah in this Union to any otheh ensign."

Poor Grandfather! Little did you realize that your hope was to be fulfilled, but not in the way you then expected.

"I just had a letter from Tilford Heck, back theah in Vuginyuh," answered the Colonel, "an' he says things are boilin' there. It would seem from his letteh that the agitators are in the saddle in the Old Dominion. I am sorry for that, suh, for I am a true Vuhginian yet. I told Tilford, in my letteh to him, that I felt her star was dimmed at that Charleston convention. Perhaps she could not do mo' with the trammels she had on. I am anxious to watch huh cou'se in the coming Baltimore convention. If she is true to huhse'f an' the Union it will be all right—otherwise we will all be sadly disappointed. I tol' him not to believe all the tales the newspapehs gave of this southern country, an' that we were all foh Douglas foh president. I don' believe the masses are fireaters. It is only the few who are in power who want to see the Union jeopardized by their ultra cou'se. I tol' him we

love the union of these states too well to give up the ship without a hard fight, an' that I felt that if they back thah in Vuhginyuh would stand firm against this cou'se the whole South would back 'em; but if on the otheh han' they side with these dissension partisans who aim only at their own aggrandisement we would spurn them and stand against this tribe in ouah midst single handed, and that if fall we must it would be through the mistaken views of ouah fo'mer friends. I tol' him we were just as much opposed to the southern fire-eaters as to the most ultra northern freedom shriekers. They both have the same object in view. As extremes meet, so with them. They meet and fight back to back against the Union."

"I'm mighty proud to heah you talk that way son, an' it's all right to talk so heah at ouah own table, but it's gettin' so you cain't talk that way down town. Of cou'se we comin' from Vuhginyuh makes 'em look on us without suspicion, but they barter 'roun' what this one said an' that one said down theah an' they don' hesitate to threaten to make it hot foh anyone who does not coincide with theah views. Even Bob Crockett, though a Union man so far as loyalty is concerned, has been poisoned an' inflamed by this continual harpin' on the wrongs which are to be perpetrated if this one is elected or that one is elected until he's with 'em foh fightin', though he won't consent to harmin' any of ouah own people heah who don' agree with 'em. You-all air so busy with youah wo'k yo' don' heah all that's goin' on, son, an' it will be just as wise if you-all keep on wo'kin' an' don' talk politics. It's been my obse'vation that these two occupations nevah did agree nohow (wo'kin' and talkin' politics) an' that of the two wo'k got the most pay."

"Oh, I'll keep on wo'kin, suh, but nobody evah yet stopped a Clarke's mouth through fear, an' I shan't hesitate to say what I think."

"That's all very well, son, but if you-all air busy theah won' be much chance foh you to get in your lick of talk, foh most of it is done by people who don't seem to have much to do, an' by the time you-all air ready to rest

they's so much in liquor that they've got beyond the point of youah associatin' with them. Some of these fellows talk as though all they had to do to get shet o' this Union is to unhook the traces. I'm afraid they's goin' to be some hard days foh somebody befo' they-all fin' out that the government is somethin' mo' than a piece of parchment with names hitched to it."

"Is theah goin' to be a wah, an' fightin', Gran'ther?" piped up young Bascom from the foot of the table.

"No, honey, we hope not," said Gran'ther. "Why, what put that into youah head?"

"Willie Trims said that his father said that Judge Reynolds said that they was goin' to lick the damned Yankees. Who is the damned Yankees, Gran'ther?"

The table was stupefied.

"Why, Bascom Clarke!" said his mother.

"Bascom!" said his father.

"Why, honey, wheah on ea'th did you get such language?" said his grandmother.

But Grandfather's eyes twinkled as he said with great severity:

"Well, son, I seem to be the only one who comprehends the question without noticing youah innocent profanity. You know when Grandmother reads to you out'en the Bible she sometimes slides ratheh light ovah certain words as she reads. I think that's a mistake, because by that means she does not convey to youthful min's like youahs the proper interpretation of the words therein contained. 'Damned' is a word made use of frequently in the Good Book, to indicate those that God has no fuhtheh use foh. They air the people who air put into a lake of fiah an' brimstone afteh they die an' nevah get out of it. You-all have heard the parson tell 'bout hell fiah an' damnation, haven't you, son?"

"Yes, suh," responded Bascom, "an' it always made me shake like I was cold."

"Shuah," continued Grandfather. "Now, I believe you have in youh min' the full meaning of that word, an' because it makes the col' chills run up an' down the backs

of people, and theahfo' tends to make 'em uncomfortable, the word is used only on rare occasions, an' nevah in polite society. Therefo' I trust that you-all will not use it otherwise, Bascom."

"Yes, suh," said Bascom.

"Theah may be times, son, when theah ain't no othah word in all the language which will fit in the place but just that one, an' mos' everyone is tempted to use it once in a while. But because of its terrible association good people don' use it 'less as a las' resort, an' in case of great stress. Do you think you-all unde'stan' the word now, son?"

"Yes, suh."

"Now, as to what is a Yankee, minus the cuss word: Now, I reckon this heah Judge What's-his-name hisse'f wouldn't think the two words could be properly separated, an' I reckon that's about the trouble down South heah."

"Yes, suh," said Bascom, uncomprehending but respectful.

Grandfather came to himself, and again recognized his youthful interrogator.

"Oh, yes, a Yankee! Well, a genuine Yankee, the original stock, you know, has to be bo'n in New England, an' be so dried up from lack of good things to eat, an' withered from hard winters as to be absolutely distinguishable from the rest o' the human race. They must be able to show that theah gran'father's gran'father's gran'father came ovah in the Mayfloweh an' that none o' the tribe has so much as touched foot outside the boundaries o' New England since, except when they went to sign the Declaration of Independence or took upon themselves the onerous job o' tellin' how the gove'nment should be run in the halls o' Congress. They mus' recognize Boston as the place whah all culchuh begun an' ended. Now we come, son, to the people designated as damned Yankees by the distinguished Judge What's-his-name: All people who exist in the United States of America who do not own slaves, ('cept o' cou'se the po' white trash heah who

wouldn't know what to do with 'em if they had 'em), come, accordin' to the dictionaries of the South, under the double and cussful definition of double-blanked Yankees. In otheh words, son, we own slaves down heah in the South, an' they don' own slaves up No'th. Therefo' we air supposed by men like this Judge What's-his-name to hate 'em like pizen, an' so to us at least they are supposed to be cast into outer darkness, or damned. Now, on the otheh han', to the Judge What's-his-name of the No'th we, being of a different opinion, and surrounded by different influences, are by them presumed to belong to those whom God has cast aside and forgot, an', I suppose, are therefo' damned so far as they are concerned. Now, son, don' let these people heah make you think that the Yankees air anythin' mo' than flesh an' blood like youse'f, an' take it f'm youah Gran'ther who has slept with 'em an' ate with 'em that if I was to take the ordinary Yankee and the ordinary Southerner an' stan' 'em side by side you couldn't tell the difference. In my min' they's all one people. They're (ahem!) fools on both sides o' the line, son, but the great mass o' the people's alike. Don' you ever be afeared to go Nawth an' mingle with 'em. You'll fin' 'em jest as generous, jest as hospitable, an' jest as good folks as you fin' heah or anywhere else in the South. Whatevah comes in youah life, you can always trust them as has the stars and stripes foh they-all flag. Youah Gran'ther's gettin' old, an' God may call him any time, but you-all jest 'member that God intended this to be one country an' one people under one flag, an' the tortures o' the damned will come to those who try to take out one star."

Grandfather's eyes blazed as he gave evpression to his patriotism, to which the freedom of his own fireside permitted him to give full vent.

"Yes, suh!" said Bascom.

"I don't like the talk, Colonel," concluded the old man, giving his son his title in full dignity, a rare thing for him, "I don' like the talk an' I'm afeered they's trouble

ahead, but I believe with you-all the good ship will weather the storm."

"My faith in the greatness of the Almighty makes me believe He will solve the problem," added Grandmother.

"Amen!" from the Colonel.

* * * * *

To Grandmother Clarke little Bascom owed practically all the education he received in his early boyhood. His mother, cumbered with the care of the household, had but little time to devote to any one of the children. So the grandmother, in the absence of other facilities, and determined that there should be at least the foundation of knowledge, used the Christian Advocate, the great Methodist Church organ, and the Bible to teach him his letters. As a consequence the boy missed the log school house and birch rod accessory of his northern contemporaries in his earlier years. However, he was in the hands of a stern and strict disciplinarian, for Grandmother was a firm believer in strict attention to the thing at hand, and kept Bascom to his tasks until he was able to read. She also taught him to write and to figure.

When a small private school was established in the village he had the advantage of a few weeks' training, but the war put an end to anything like systematic education. However, the constant encouragement he received from his grandmother to learn things and a desire on his own part to know things contributed to give him that foundation for a broad practical education which stood him in good stead in later years. No one can estimate the influence of this good woman on his life. She lived her Christianity. Her soul was an open book before the Lord, and she inculcated her faith, absolute and complete, in her grandson.

"Honey," she said, "Never doubt Him. There will come days when you think He has deserted you; when you'll wonder why you can't find Him. Pray to Him, Bascom, pray with all your min' an' strength, and the light will come."

Fed upon this sublime faith it is little wonder that in all his after years he never failed to reach up after the Omnipotent Hand when the stress of earthly events threatened to overwhelm him.

"Faith, honey," she said, "is the golden chain by which Love holds Confidence. Hope is the co'ner stone of righteous determination. Charity is the perfume of Christ's influence. I want you to be a good man, Bascom boy. I want you-all to live so somebody will thank God you were bo'n. You-all air mighty hotheaded sometimes, honey, and you ain't goin' to get through youah life without some ha'd knocks.

"You-all air goin' to fin' that the world is full of folk who air nothin' but pretenders. They pretend they have faith, but if they-all don' have love and confidence you'll know they're jest pretendin'. They'll be tellin' how much hope they own, but if you-all look closely and fin' they-all ain't tryin' to he'p somebody else git higher set 'em down as pretenders. You'll heah folk tellin' how much charity they have, but if you cain't fin' anyone who goes down on his knees an' with the tears streamin' down his cheeks thanks God that these partic'lar charity shouters was bo'n you-all can make up youah min' they-all Christlike perfume is a sham.

"When I was young, honey, an' about the time youah Grandfather was cou'tin' me, a very dear frien' o' mine brought me from Paris some attar o' roses. I used jest a little drop o' it in the draw' wheah I kept my fine linen, and it stayed and stayed and stayed, and was always jest the same delicate hint of the flower. Somebody gave youah sister some a while ago, boughten down heah to the sto'. It smelt all right to sta't with, but in a little while when you opened the draw' it smelled mo' like campeen. Whatevah you air be it, honey. The Lord's goin' to measure yuh by what yuh air, at the finish, and as He is the only one that really counts, what's the use o' livin' a sham all youah life?

"They was a man back theah in Vuhginyuh, Simeon Trask, po' white trash. He nevah had a chance. His

father was a drunken, shiftless vagabond and his mother a ne'er-do-well, ignorant and slovenly. Nobody trusted any o' 'em, root or branch. I saw Simeon take a bleedin' an' crushed dog which somebody had run ovah in the road, and wash its wounds and dress 'em, and care for the dog till it got well and strong. I saw him stop one day and free a little bird that 'd got tangled in some netting and lift it high and watch it with satisfaction as it swiftly flew back to its nestlings. I saw him pick up a little nigger girl that'd sprained her ankle and couldn't walk, and carry her to her cabin. I believe Simeon Trask 'll come closer to gettin' to heaven finally than the hypocritical 'Squire Allen who would spend a half houah at a time tellin' the Lord all about what he wanted the Lord to do, while almost befo' he'd said 'Amen' he'd be figgerin' how he could squeeze a dollah out o' some po' man he'd got wheah he couldn't wiggle!"

And it was this kind of talk that gave Bascom the foundation of faith, hope and charity upon which rested his after life. The Clarke home was characterized by open frankness between the members of the household. The children were never in a state of repression and restraint, although early trained to absolute and unquestioning obedience.

The mother, though not physically strong, was an energetic, indefatigable worker. She was the home-maker for Colonel Clarke, and that was sufficient for her. She was proud of her husband, and her whole life was devoted to him and her family. She wanted no broader field of action, and was content.

The grandfather, dignified, straight and vigorous, notwithstanding four score years had crept upon him, enjoyed the respite from labor which his age gave him, but possessed a keen interest in the questions of the day. He and Bob Crockett kept enough wild game in the larders of the two households to render unnecessary recourse very often to the staple bacon, ham and salt pork.

In the spring of 1860, the old gentleman went out after ducks in the river bottom. The fowl were on their way

up from the far south and were resting by the thousands in and about the waters of the White. While wading in the overflow retrieving some ducks, the grandfather caught cold, pneumonia resulted, and in a few days this splendid character had yielded to the great conqueror.

It was Bascom's first close observation of the grim destroyer's work. As he looked into the face and saw no smile of recognition and felt no hand reach out to rest lovingly on his head, his little heart was broken. He and Grandfather had been comrades, and the old man had talked to him about the great problems of life, had advised with him about proper lines of conduct. The full realization of what it all meant did not come to him until later.

As the days came and went, and he missed the tender companionship and solicitude of this old cavalier, he could not reason out why this loss had come to them. Unconsciously he would turn to Grandfather to help him unravel some tangle of perplexity, only to remember that they had taken him to the little cemetery on the hill. Over there the little boy would go and stand close by, looking at the mound of fresh earth, as though the loved voice might come to him from the grave.

Grandmother seemed to change. Before, she had been a part of this world and its activities. Now, she could be seen looking, looking, ever looking, as if to catch a glimpse of the inside of the great beyond, where he had gone. She would touch with tenderness the things about the house which were his. The old flint-lock musket hung above the fireplace, and the more modern fowling-piece, which he had used on the day when he was out last, stood in a corner. She was lonely, lonely, and all the world would not be company to her now. All the years she had lived with him, with scarce the separation of a day, came back in a troop of memories. Now when she talked to Bascom, it was about the grandfather. She told him stories of his boyhood and the things in his life which went to develop his strong character.

“I felt like murmuring, honey,” she said softly, one day, “I felt like murmuring, for he was good, and God took him. But, oh, I praise God that I had him, that all these years He has permitted me to know and love and keep him. And now, I can only say, ‘The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ ”

CHAPTER V.

"I understan', suh," said Will, the oldest son, addressing his father one morning at the breakfast table, "I understan' Wade Andrews los' ten niggers las' night."

"How'd they get away?"

"They didn't get away, suh. He los' 'em at pokah. Theah was a pretty big game runnin', and a fellow from down Memphis way made a cleanin'."

"A man that'd gamble away his niggers ain't fitten to have 'em," chimed in the grandmother. "I don' wondah some people get a bad impression of slaveholders. A man like Wade Andrews, who has no mo' consideration for his people than to barter 'em at a gamin' table, does mo' to stir up harsh feelin's than the thousands of slaveholders who look upon theah slaves as part o' the family can do to justify holdin' 'em. What is the Memphis man goin' to do with the niggers?"

"I understan' they-all is to be sold tomorrow mawnin' at the market place, all 'cept one, a big nigger that the man is goin' to take down to Memphis with him, because he thinks he can get a better price."

"That's what I don' like about the whole thing," answered Grandmother. "It's always, 'How much money can I make out of 'em?' If God put these people in ouah han's we ought to keep 'em togetheh. They ain't like cattle and sheep. If we barter 'em 'roun in selfish hope to make money outen 'em I believe we'll be punished for it."

"Look out, Mother," chaffed the Colonel, "somebody'll cha'ge you with bein' an ab'litionist!"

"I ain't no ab'litionist. I'm a Christian, an' if the South will mix a little mo' Christianity in the treatment of its bond-people it will be in better condition to stand on its legs and uphold its right to 'em. Go back to youah

Bible and see what God did to Pharaoh when he forgot how to treat the chil'en of Israel! He cleared a path for 'em to get away, and Pharaoh los' all of them. They was mighty valuable to Pharaoh, too, and it took the ol' king a long time to get hisse'f and his people so they could get along without 'em. We ought to take warnin'!"

"It don' seem to me," said Mother Clarke, "that Aunt Lou and Uncle Sol would be any bettah off if they were free than they-all be now."

"No," responded Grandmother, "probably they-all wouldn't be as well off as they air. But you-all know all the niggers in the South ain't Aunt Louises and Uncle Sols, and all the people in the South ain't Clarkes!"

"I don' see what the people up Nawth want to bothah about our niggers foh, anyway," pursued Mother. "We ain't interferein' with any of theah doin's. We-all air mindin' ouah own business, and why cain't they-all let us alone?"

"But, Mother," answered the Colonel to his wife's query, "that's where the trouble comes. They say we-all ain't mindin' ouah own business, but want to push slavery into their territory. I agree with you that if the southern politicians had been content to let well enough alone, and have slavery confined to the part of the country where it originally was, and had not sought to extend it into new states as they were made there would have been no trouble, at least not foh years to come. But they have spit fiah at each otheh down theah at Washin'ton, these Southern hotheads and Nawth'n agitators, till they-all have agreed to disagree on every question, no matter what. It doesn't make any difference what the question is, nor how unimpohtant, they finally get agoin' on slavery. All hands immediately forget they-all air representin' the people of the United States, and divide themselves into Southerners and Nawthe'ners. Then each one of 'em goes home, and tells the people what great things he has done and said, and repeats some of the hot stuff, and the people get on fiah who don' stop to reason, and hate each otheh as a result."

"They-all say, suh," broke in the oldest son, "that the South is goin' out of the Union and form a gove'ment of its own."

"That wouldn't solve the question, son," answered the Colonel. "If they-all cain't solve this matteh among themselves, as man to man, and reach such a settlement as will be fair, just and equitable to all, war is the inevitable result. Down heah, if men don' agree, they sometimes fight a duel, and one or the other of them or both sometimes get pretty badly hurt. If I am not mistaken we may see a duel on a large scale. I do not flatter myse'f it will be a bloodless duel. Some one is bound to get hurt. Every drop spilled will cry out in anguish that this great nation, built for liberty and with every provision for the settlement of all questions by the votes of the people, was a failure. If this gove'ment fails to stand then we might as well bid good-bye to democratic gove'ment forever."

"Bob Crockett is in foh fightin', suh," continued Will. "He says if Arkansaw goes out of the Union he's goin' with her."

"Yes," answered the Colonel with a touch of sadness, "Men seem to be putting the state above the Union. Following that to its logical conclusions and you will later find the counties arraigned against the state, and then the towns against the counties, until there is no longer a great big national patriotism, and all things will be viewed through the glasses of the locality. Bob is impetuous, and he won't stop to reason out the matter much. He will be swung into line as soon as that fighting spirit of his is appealed to, and he'll fight, too, there's no gain-sayin' that."

"I wish Grandfather was here," softly spoke the old lady. "He'd help 'em all to understand. I wish he were here. I cain't seem to get the right of this at all."

"Father couldn't stem the tide alone, Mother," gravely answered the Colonel, "and if we were to have a war between the states and against the gove'ment it would break

his heart to see any other flag in the air as representing any part of the American people."

"Perhaps it is better he is at rest. Perhaps it is best. God knows best. But, oh, I do miss him so."

No eye was dry at the table, for each missed him in his or her own way.

"If they's goin' to be any fightin', suh, and Bob Crockett goes, I am goin' too, suh, with youah permission," continued the oldest son.

"You ain't agoin'! You ain't agoin'!" put in Mother Clarke. "They-all won't need you. Let them do the fightin' that wants a war, and let my chil'en alone! Don't talk like that, child, you-all air too young to go to war!"

"I'm seventeen years old, Mother, and Bob Crockett says I handle a gun like an old-timer."

"Bob Crockett! Bob Crockett! Why, Bob Crockett was bo'n and raised to fight. He's got fight in his blood, but you was bo'n in peace and of a peace-lovin' family. They ain't no use talkin', honey, you ain't agoin'!"

"I come from a fightin' family, too, Mother. Wasn't Grandfather one of the bravest and best men that evah was, and isn't my father one of the best soldiers in America, even if there hasn't been any war for him to fight in?"

"Youah grandfather and youah father air different. You air only a boy, and it would be a shame to take you-all away from youah family and make you fight, and maybe be killed," and she commenced to cry at the very thought of it.

The father comforted her and told her not to worry. There wasn't any war yet, and the boy hadn't gone to fight and be killed.

"When the time comes we will look the matter square in the face," said the Colonel, "and you shall do that which your conscience dictates is right. I shall feel as badly as your mother, William, but when it comes to a question of duty I shall not stand between my children and what they believe way down in their hearts is right,

if it involves no matter that reflects on their moral character."

"Don't let him go, James," spoke up Grandmother, "he is too young."

"If none but the men of mature judgment and ripe experience did the fighting there would be but few wars. It takes cool heads and trained minds to lay out the plan of campaign, but its accomplishment must depend to a great measure on the impetuosity and impulsiveness, dash and abandon of the young man who doesn't stop to think of consequences. The older man measures first and acts afterwards. The young man acts and lets the other fellow do all the measuring."

There was a moment's pause and then Grandmother said again:

"I wish Granfather was here."

* * * * *

The next day Bascom saw the slaves sold. As each one came forward and stood upon the platform where all could see and examine them the auctioneer in a sing-song tone told of the merits of each and called for bids. It was Saturday afternoon and all the planters were in town. The bidding was lively and the slaves brought good prices. There seemed to be no heartrending sadness in the faces of the bondmen. They were laughing and chatting away with their fellows. In fact, they appeared to be paying a great deal of attention to the bids, as though measuring their own value by the amount offered for them.

On the outer edge of the crowd was a fringe of negroes from the plantations nearby, who were evidently as much interested in the proceedings as their masters. It was a part of the life to which they were born.

Andrews' Caesar, the one who was not to be sold, was the center of a knot of negroes away from the others. He was the one who was to accompany his new master down the river to Memphis. By him stood a mulatto girl from the Wilson plantation, who was to see the last of her big lover. Tears were running down her cheeks,

but she did not murmur against the system. It was a part of the life, and though her heart was breaking with the grief of separation she saw no wrong in it. Caesar comforted her as best he could, but seemed to have more interest in the journey he was to take and the things he would see in the strange country to which he was going. He had no love for his late master, and outside this yellow girl, was evidently totally indifferent to the proceedings.

"Marse Wilson am gwine to try to buy you-all," said the mulatto girl.

"Am he?" answered Caesar. "I don't s'pose dis hyah man'll sell me to him. Dey ain't nobody can pay enough foh me hyah."

There was a certain amount of pride expressed in this. The fact that he was worth so much that no one in that neighborhood could afford to keep him appealed to him and marked him for great respect among the other colored people.

Wilson offered Caesar's new master as high as \$2,000 for him, but even this amount, large for that community, was refused, and the big negro went down the river on a boat that came along that evening.

Bascom was very much interested in the whole proceeding. He was all around, close up to the auction block during the sale, and mixed in with the crowd. He heard the comments on the values of the slaves, while to him the auctioneer who held the center of the platform and discoursed on the merits of the chattels, was invested with a glory in the boy's mind which would have increased an already enormous estimate of his own importance.

Bob Crockett had spied him once during the sale, and had put his hand playfully on the lad's head:

"Which nigger air you-all goin' to buy, sonny?"

"I ain't agoin' to buy none of 'em," he answered. "My grandmother says 'tain't right to sell 'em."

"Ho! Ho! Grandmother says 'tain't right, does she? What objection does she have to sellin' 'em?"

"She says," answered Bascom, scenting criticism of

his beloved Grandmother, "she says they ought to be kept together and taken cayah of, 'cause God says so."

Bob laughed, and stroked the youngster's head.

"Youah grandmother, sonny, is a good woman, and she can get mo' immediate and direct info'mation f'm the Almighty than mos' o' the folks. Probably 'cause she spends mo' time in conve'sation with Him than the rest of us. But I reckon as long as we have slavery,—and I reckon that'll be always,—they'll have to be sales of 'em. If folks only had a few niggers they mought keep 'em as long as they'd live, jes' like you'd keep an ol' hawse that'd been true and faithful. But when yuh got a lot of 'em and times change with yuh, somebody' else's got to take 'em or they would starve. An' they'll have to be sold or freed, and if you don' sell 'em and all youah money is in the niggers you will starve, too, and if you free 'em they-all 'll hang roun' heah so impohtant that they have a bad influence on the otheh niggers. So, 'bout the only way to get shet of 'em and not disturb things too much, sonny, is to sell 'em, youah esteemed and beloved grandmother to the contrary notwithstanding."

Bascom went home somewhat mixed in his mental process. Bob Crockett was his hero, while his grandmother was his judge. So he stated the result of his conversation to the old lady for her rebuttal.

"Bob Crockett looks at these things, honey, from the standpoint of money, and money ain't all they is in this world. To my min' it is the least."

"Why, Grandmother, wouldn't you-all like to have a lot of money?" said Bascom in wonderment, because the possession of wealth to him in those days was consonant with greatness and the accomplishment of big things.

"No, honey, I wouldn't like to have a lot of money if the makin' or the takin' of it was to cause somebody a lot of sufferin'. I'd rather be poor and makin' folks happy than rich and makin' people miserable. Don' you ever let 'em make you-all believe, honey, that money 'll buy you happiness, except as you-all spend it to make happiness. If you-all spend money foh the happiness of

otheh people God'll give you mo', and you'll be rich no matter how much you got. But if you don' spend money foh otheh people's happiness, the money you get, no matter how much, won't be God's money, and you'll be a pauper in happiness youse'f, even if you measure youah wealth by the hundreds of thousands of dollahs."

This philosophy of the good old lady kept soaking into the moral fiber of Bascom through the years and years that followed, and was by him proved to be absolutely correct.

CHAPTER VI.

Lincoln was elected! News traveled by slow post usually to the back towns of Arkansas, but this was considered bad news, and it certainly followed the old adage and beat all records for swiftness. The wiser ones knew what this meant on the great chess board of national life, and immediate preparations were made to sacrifice the pawns, rooks and knights to checkmate the will of the majority. The Saturday following the receipt of the news beheld an unusual sight in the streets of Mount Adams.

"So they've called our hands, have they?" said Wilson, the planter whose slaves ran up into the hundreds. "Well, they'll find there's no bob-tail flush in the South. What do they know about fightin', these namby-pamby, greasy mechanics up Nawth! They've nevah even fiahed a squirrel gun and the smell o' powdah would be so strange to 'em they'd mistake it foh some new-fangeled pahfume. By the time these damned Yankees get 'roun' to run the gove'ment they-all 'll fin' they ain't no gove'ment foh 'em to run. We-all air goin' to have wah, an' we might as well get ready for it."

This seemed to voice the general sentiment and a military company was immediately organized. The fighting spirit was aroused and nearly everybody in the community, old and young, was ready to offer his services. A motley array of arms was collected, running from the old flint-lock of Davy Crockett down to the squirrel rifle and double-barrelled shot gun, duelling pistols and ancient pattern pepper-box revolvers.

The young lads caught the spirit and the First Arkansas Cadet Corps resulted, of which young Bascom was a member, largely self-constituted as such, but in his own mind one of the most important among them. McFarren Price, now a merchant of Stuttgart, Arkansas, was made

captain, almost by general consent. Bascom voted for himself for every other position down to and including corporal. In fact, when the tellers were counting ballots on each announcement of the result, way down at the tail of the list they would invariably announce:

“And one for Bascom B. Clarke!”

And this was not an evidence of conceit, but of boyish enthusiasm. Had it been conceit, after the election was over the lad would have refused to continue as a common private, feeling that his valuable services were not properly appreciated. His brother Will, older and more mature, did not aspire to official recognition, but was content to subordinate himself if it only gave him a chance to fight. The younger boys were let in by sufferance, although they were not permitted to use the fire-arms.

“They won’t do no hahm,” said Bob Crockett, “an’ you mought as well let ’em in and they-all ’ll be whah we can look after ’em.”

It was a great time for the lad and his associates. The cause for which they were enlisted did not matter to them. But the wooden guns, the white duck trousers with red stripes, good-naturedly made by the mothers and sisters of the boys, and the opportunity to drill and be taught the manual of arms, made them, in their minds, a part of the great army of conquest which was to subdue the “Nawth” and establish a new country. Tom Hawkins was drill master and, though somewhat rusty in his knowledge of tactics brought down from old militia days, managed to get the lines in some kind of shape, instruct the amateur soldiers in simple evolutions and show them how to “carry,” “present” and “port” arms.

It was, to be sure, an awkward squad, but it was earnest and tractable. The little lads learned quickly, more so than their elders, because they were constantly at it all day long. It was the only game they played and they played it hard. The “nigger uprising” which the leaders of the South had predicted was, in the judgment of these boys, effectually forestalled by their prompt and efficient

answer to the call of the South. They figuratively and in pantomime killed the entire negro race, always preserving, however, the colored servants in their own families. They would march upon the enemy in full battle array, halt, perfect the formation of the line, "aim," "fire" and then "charge." The "niggers" and "Yankees" could be seen in their vivid imaginations, flying in terror before them. After the imaginary prisoners of war had been summarily put to death the sentries would be duly posted and the army would go into camp to talk over the day's victories and plan for the morrow's coup.

Events followed swiftly, the opening shot of the great war had been fired at Fort Sumter, and soon Arkansas voted to secede from the Union. The state called for volunteers. The whites for miles around gathered at Mount Adams, and excitement ran high. The negroes nearly all stayed on the plantations, too frightened to move. They had heard enough of the discussion to know that their race was in some way involved in the turmoil, and they were being held responsible for the impending conflict. No matter if they had done nothing themselves to justify the attitude of their masters toward them individually, they were a part of the great mass of slaves, and gradually it sifted through their dense understanding that possibly they might be free if the Yankees won out.

So the little town of Mount Adams seethed and boiled with hatred towards the North and loyalty to the South and her institutions. A down river packet had brought the news of the secession and the call. In a short time an old cannon, loaned to the village some time before for the Fourth of July celebrations, began pounding as fast as it could be swabbed, loaded and fired. Its echoes answered all up and down the valley. The fife and drums filled the air with martial music. With Americans nothing seems to so stir the fighting blood as the shrill fife and its accompanying drums. The bugle is the aristocracy of war time musical instruments, the fife is the common people. So the martial strains of the fife and drums,

with cannon-shot punctuation, set the nerves of the village folk tingling and keyed them to the pitch of unrestrained excitement. There was a call for Bob Crockett and he mounted a box.

"Fellow citizens," he began, "they ain't much need of any speech to you-all. Old Arkansaw has called to us in the name o' the South. Nevah yet in the history of this country has a call been made for fightehs that that call has not been answered by tens of thousands of the best men in the land. I believe and you-all believe that we're right. They have elected a Yankee foh the head o' this nation who is in favoh of freein' the slaves and settin' 'em against their masters. Air we goin' to stan' it? No! Every true Southern min' says 'No!' If I know the spirit o' the people of the South, and I think I do, in thirty days the Nawth will fin' such an army of determined, brave men confrontin' her that she will be wise enough not to lay han's on. Ol' Arkansaw asks my services foh the defense of her good name and her people and her right to make such laws as will protect ouah property. I belong to Arkansaw! If the ol' state wants my services they air at her command. If she wants some one to fight foh her, I will answer 'Present!' If she wants some one to die foh her, I will say, 'Take Bob Crockett; I'm ready!' Whetheh to live or die! Whetheh for peace or wah! Whatevah the future has foh me, I'm goin' to put my name down on this roll in answer to the call o' my state."

Bob grew more and more earnest, ending with a final appeal to others to join him in going to the front, and they crowded forward by the dozens when he had ended. When the next packet went down the river the recruits were escorted to the landing by the fife and drum corps and all the inhabitants of the village and the plantations round about, while the old cannon was again called into requisition to add its ponderous voice to the farewell. Some of the recruits were from the company of cadets, and they bore themselves with all the military dignity with which they had been so recently invested.



BOB CROCKETT



WHITE RIVER

As they went on board they sang with a zest and vim:

We are a band of brothers,
And natives of the soil,
Fighting for the property
We've gained by honest toil,
And when our rights were threatened
The cry rose near and far
To hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag
Which bears a single star.

They carried a "bonnie blue flag" presented to them by the ladies of the village through Miss Petonia B. Crockett, sister of Bob. Of course Bob Crockett was unanimously chosen as the head of the local company and later rose to the command of a regiment in the Confederate army.

All that was left of the company of cadets formed the official escort, heading the line and leading the way to the landing. The smaller boys, in full uniform, with a "bonnie blue flag" made out of cambric proudly flung to the breeze, were permitted a conspicuous place in the procession. And close up to the colors, marching with dignified and stately tread, keeping step to the swing of the martial music, was Bascom B. Clarke, southern patriot.

It had been a keen disappointment to him that he was not privileged to go and participate in the bloody conflict. He saw a mother break down and cry bitterly as her son waved her a last adieu from the deck of the steamer, and marveled that there could be any grief accompanying such a glorious separation. Men turned away in sadness to hide the choke in their throats and the tears in their eyes. Some of them realized the serious side of the perilous policy upon which the South had ventured.

But neither the grief of separation nor serious contemplation of portended tragedy touched the youthful contingent in the escort. They could see only the marching columns and uniformed men, the bayonets catching the gleam of the smiling sun, their colors waving proudly in the breeze and the campfires' glow at night when the sol-

diers were at rest. They could hear only the strains of the martial music as it gave them the time, and the huzzas of victory as the enemy gave way before the conquering host. They saw no weary men, with laggard step and dejected air, sick at heart for their own homes and firesides, nor did they hear the moans and groans of the wounded and dying. There did not come to them the bitterness of defeat or the hardships and privations the soldiers in the field on either side must experience. One hundred days would soon pass, the war would be over, and these men would be back in Mount Adams, a part of a conquering host! Bascom began to count the days, but he never saw them come back, and some of them never came back, but sleep in shallow graves on the battlefields of a great fratricidal war.

Bascom had gravely approached Bob Crockett the day before the departure of the company, and had announced that he wanted to go, too.

“Why, sonny, you-all cain’t go. You ain’t old enough.”

“I kin shoot, suh. You-all know I kin shoot, foh you taught me how.”

“Yes, boy, you-all can shoot, but it’s goin’ to take some-thin’ more’n shootin’. It looks like a campmeetin’ and Glory Hallelujah to you, sonny, but I’m afeered we’ve got a man’s work cut out foh us. You go home and ask youah grandmother to pray foh us, foh I reckon we-all ’ll need all her prayehs afo’ we get through with this scrimmage. I’m proud, sonny, that you-all want to go an’ fight foh ol’ Arkansaw, an’ you a Vuhginyan, but you ain’t needed now at the front and they’all ’ll need you at home.”

He patted the boy on the shoulder affectionately and then was called away. The years rolled around many times before Bascom again saw Bob Crockett. But Bob Crockett, despite his roughness and frailties, was always a part of the after life of the boy. Brave, strong, courageous, yet with a gentleness and consideration that brought him close to the weak and the troubled, it is little wonder that his soldiers idolized him, neither is it to be wondered that

he won promotion after promotion for gallantry and added luster to the laurels of Arkansas in the war.

Very soon the money of the Confederacy began to make its appearance, and the coin and bills of the government of the United States disappeared. Indeed, it was considered treasonable to use the latter. When the first bills of the new government of the Confederate States of America arrived they were grabbed with anxious greediness by everybody, and with a sense of gratified pride the people promptly accepted them as the circulating medium. Taking advantage of this patriotic demonstration in favor of their new government, so manifest by the people, and acceding to the apparent wishes of the populace, the men who owned the Jewish Supply Store of Rodjesky & Company, facilitated the exchange from United States to Confederate States cash. They promptly retired the former; and to further attest their patriotism, did not again offer a single piece of it. Their dealings with the people, in the purchase of cotton and other produce, gave them opportunity to dispose of large amounts of the new currency.

Rodjesky & Company located themselves at the landing before the Clarkes arrived and the boom toward a big city began. The "Supply House," as it was called, was designed to carry everything needed by the people, dry goods, groceries, hardware, drugs and medicines, agricultural machinery, and such other goods and materials as might be called for. The trade of the establishment ran back from the river for miles, reaching all the plantations. Their accounts with the planters were very heavy, as practically all the cotton from that region passed through their hands to market. Adolph Rodjesky, the head of the establishment, had become impressed with the sterling integrity and worth of Colonel Clarke. When the latter's surveying was done he was employed in the supply house, and the details of the business were largely in his hands.

For a time after the opening of the war things ran along about as usual in the village. News from the front came through very slowly and was so colored in the interests of the Confederacy as to give the impression of an

unbroken line of Southern successes. But the hundred days went by and the war was not at end. It was practically impossible to get any news of the men who had departed in such a blaze of enthusiasm. Their relatives began to worry as reports of battles found their way to the hamlet, and laughter was a rare sound, except among the children.

Then came the blockading of the ports and even the Rodjesky Company was unable to get supplies from below. First one article could not be furnished, and then another, until the people began to taste the privations of war. Tea, coffee, pepper, drugs and medicines, and finally even salt was unobtainable. The Confederate currency, brought in and accepted with such pride, began to depreciate in value until prices under it were nearly prohibitive.

A pound of pepper cost \$300, a pair of boots was \$80 and of shoes \$35, while a turkey would bring \$20 and a sheep \$50. A half bushel of salt, gospel measure lacking, cost \$16 in United States money or its equivalent in cotton at Helena, from which point most of the stores for the village came. For coffee various substitutes were used, parched okra seeds or rye and even sweet potatoes cooked to a crisp; for tea, sassafras root was usually the substitute, and became such a favorite that it can be found on many pretentious Southern tables to this time. Quinine was a necessity in view of the malaria which haunted the vicinity of the river. The inability to procure this drug caused great physical distress. Salt was obtained by digging up the dirt floors of the smoke houses, where for years the well-salted hams had dripped while smoking. The dirt was placed in water and the salt went into solution. The water was then drained off and evaporated, leaving the salt as a result. It was a tedious process but the wastefulness of former years in this case proved a veritable blessing.

The dreaded "Yanks" had possession of the Mississippi River along the Arkansas border. Memphis, the pride of the middle Southern states, came into the hands of the Union, much to the consternation of her Arkansas

neighbors, and the now hated stars and stripes floated defiantly from the court house. Gradually the Father of Waters yielded to the Union forces and its tributaries and sub-tributaries were opened to the boats bearing Old Glory. And yet so saturated were the people with the idea that the Southern hosts were unconquerable that they did not realize the full meaning and measure of the conquests thus far obtained until one day the town of Mount Adams became panic stricken at the cry:

“The Yanks are coming! The Yanks are coming!”

Out onto the bluff ran the entire population, in terrified awe. Sure enough, the long line of gunboats and transports were slowly moving up the river like a huge serpent. Unobserved, Colonel Wheat's cavalry had crept to an adjoining bluff which formed a natural fortification and opened fire with four or five hundred double-barrelled shot-guns, each loaded with three buckshot and a minnie ball. Their fire was directed upon a transport loaded almost to the guards with Union soldiers, and the havoc was terrible. Many were killed and wounded.

The non-combatants, among whom was the ten-year-old soldier, Bascom B. Clarke, were stunned and dazed at the tragedy. Before they could recover from their surprise the leading gunboat sounded its whistle signalling the others to attack, turned and fired a broadside of shot and shell, while from far down the river came the raking fire of another. But the cavalry departed as silently as they came. On account of the high banks the shells thrown did not reach the main part of the village, but exploded a mile beyond. One grape-shot struck the house of Dr. Bagby, which subsequently became the home of Bob Crockett. When the first gunboat rounded to, and began to shoot, Bascom started for home, and the details of that trip from the bluff to his mother are not very accurate in his mind. He only knew that he heard the thunder of the first gun, and then found he had covered the entire distance to shelter in an incredibly short space of time. The celerity with which he moved brought to his mind

in later days that old story of the negro witness who was testifying in a shooting case:

"How long after the first shot was the second one fired?" asked the examining lawyer.

"About three seconds, sah."

"Where were you when the first shot was fired?"

"'Bout ten feet from de man what was shootin'."

"Where were you when the second shot was fired?"

"'Bout ten squares down street, sah."

The children were huddled into the houses with the women, and doors were locked and barred, for all expected an avenging host to land and destroy everything in sight. Fear blanched the faces of the older people, not for themselves, but for the helpless ones among them, for had they not been repeatedly told that Yankee presence meant tyranny, oppression and a negro uprising? But the troops were not landed. No answer coming from the bluff to the fire of the gunboats, they proceeded cautiously up the river.

So far as being prepared for an uprising, the colored people were as frightened as the whites, for the terror of their masters and mistresses and the constant reminders uttered in their presence that they were the cause of the entire trouble, kept them constantly in a state of fear. In their centuries of absolute dependence on these people the negroes had an inherited homage to their owners, and a fear of their displeasure. Even their hope of freedom, if, indeed, such a hope did possess their minds, and unspoken prayers for the success of the boys in blue, could not overcome in a day this hereditary homage and fear. They kept rather close to their quarters and followed the routine of work assigned to them just as they had done before the war began. So they helped to feed and support the army and the people who were insisting on their remaining in slavery.

CHAPTER VII.

The chaotic condition of affairs was apparent even to the children who could not understand. Wandering bands of bushwhackers menacing alike those loyal to the South and the Northern invaders kept the people in a constant state of anxiety. The second bombardment of the village was due to one of these marauding bands. They fired from the same bluff on some gunboats convoying transports. Not only did the gunboats shell the town, but a force was landed and cleaned out every store, including that of Colonel James Thomas Upshire Hawkins, the drill master of Mount Adams' first contribution to the Confederacy. They took his last cheese, carried off his pet squirrels, and emptied out his liquor, an outrage no true son of Arkansas could see any possible excuse for.

"Damn 'em! If they didn't want to drink it why didn't they leave it for them that does?" remarked one old fellow who saw the material for his daily drams thus rudely wasted.

The bushwhackers, having performed their usual act of tantalization, had rapidly moved away and left the innocent people of the town to suffer for their acts. But that was true all through the war. The ones who suffered the most and the keenest, and the ones who had the most privations, were not those who started or conducted the conflict, but those who, not participating, had to bear the brunt of its results. The Southern women, who patiently met the problems of daily existence, uninspired by the cheers of fellows in battle, unsupported by the feeling that they were part of a struggle in a great cause; who, month in and month out, were compelled to answer the question of their children, "Why doesn't papa come home?" and who met the rigors of absolute poverty uncomplainingly and with rare fortitude; these women de-

serve a monument, a pure white shaft, rising somewhere toward the eternal heavens.

On the second visit of the Yankees little Bascom, who had discovered that he was not killed by the presence of the Yankees the first time, was an interested, though somewhat removed spectator. The first time he had flown to his mother and grandmother for protection, and they, though in great fear themselves, had soothed and quieted him and kept him close until the danger had passed.

Soon afterwards the grandmother closed her eyes and joined Grandfather on the other side of the dark river. The end came in peaceful belief that all was well with her, and with a smile and a blessing she bade farewell to the little family group around her bedside. Death here was no conqueror: he was the herald of brightness and glory.

"Don't cry, honey," she said to Bascom. "I'm only goin' over the river to meet Grandfather. I'll wait theah foh you-all when you come. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! I'm goin' home!"

With sadness, yet with absolute faith the body of the old lady was placed in a grave on the hillside beside Grandfather.

The times grew desperately hard. More and more difficult did it become to get the necessities of life. The Yankee blockade was so efficient that it was almost impossible to obtain anything not raised in the immediate neighborhood, and with the purchasing power of the currency continually going down under the advance of the Federal forces, but little could be bought. Christmas of 1862 found the Clarkes in poor condition to celebrate, and the sacrifices made by the father and mother in an endeavor to give some character to the occasion were little understood by the other members of the family. The Colonel had sold a little cotton he had taken on a debt. It was bought by Colonel Redman, a wealthy planter whose plantation was across the river from Mount Adams. Besides what he raised he had been buying from his neighbors,

and had it safely hidden in the timber and canebrakes of the bottoms.

Colonel Clarke, after selling the cotton, took a pillow case and brought it home half filled with flour, purchased with the cotton money. After the children were in bed Christmas Eve, Mrs. Clarke had made some ginger cake figures, with scanty sweetening, for Christmas gifts. Then, for the feast day dinner, hot biscuit and butter, fresh fried pork and parched corn coffee constituted the menu. God had not forsaken the Clarke family on this Christmas day, and the Colonel's prayer of thanksgiving as they all sat down to the meal was echoed in the hearts of all.

It was soon after this that the Colonel undertook a journey to Helena. The supply of quinine at the Rodjesky store had given out and in that malarial district such a condition was little less than a calamity. It was therefore absolutely required that some one should undertake the hazardous journey to Helena for the drug. Colonel Clarke volunteered to go, and succeeded in getting through the lines and out again with the precious medicine. Before reaching Mount Adams, however, he was taken ill as a result of his exposure. He finally arrived home, and was given the best care and treatment possible, but he did not rally and was soon laid in the cemetery.

Consternation seized the family, for they had never dreamed of a condition arising by which they would be deprived of the support and counsel of this strong man. Full of resource, possessed of indomitable energy, never deterred from his purpose by any obstacle, not only his own family but the entire community had come to rely upon him in times of stress. The stricken mother, who had depended more and more upon her idolized husband, was weighed down by a grief too great to be spoken. For a time she tried to keep the family together and minister to them, but weary in body and broken in spirit, the task was too great for her, and in a very short time she, too, found the narrow habitation prepared for all.

It seemed the climax to all misfortune. The eldest

daughter, Mary, burdened with sorrow, sought to find some way by which they could all remain together. But it seemed impossible. The home, once full of happiness and with cheerfulness and laughter predominating, with splendid characters and living examples of piety, integrity and heart goodness, was now desolate. The homes of practically everybody in the neighborhood were opened to them, one offering to provide for this one, and another for that, until it seemed best to separate. No other solution to the problem presented itself, and with anguish of soul the girl finally gave up to the inevitable. The already meager larder furnished but scanty hope for subsistence, and would have been entirely depleted had it not been for the generosity and thoughtfulness of the neighbors. None too well provided for themselves, they each contributed a little until there was enough for the time.

But Mary realized this could not go on for long, so she gathered the little brood for a council. With aching heart and tears streaming down her cheeks the sister tenderly outlined the situation, and the provision made for each. The smaller children, used to having some one reason and think out the line of conduct for them, wondered why they could not go on living as they had before, but did not voice objection. The older ones viewed the matter from all sides, and then with a sigh acknowledged that it was the only thing they could do. And the family was scattered, never to be together again as a family.

Bascom was given a home with George Ramsdale, who had four beautiful daughters and no son. Not only was he made welcome, but the planter wanted to adopt him. The plantation was remote from the river and up to this time had not been molested by either the "Yanks" or the bushwhackers. Here he was well provided for, and everything done to make him feel that he was part of the family. Mary Margaret, the oldest daughter, was attending Miss Jeffreys' school, ten miles away.

One very pleasant duty assigned to the new "son" was the accompanying of Mary Margaret to her school, so as to "carry her hoss" back. The girl rode the swiftest run-

ning horse in the neighborhood, a little chestnut sorrel, which she owned. Bascom was astride a magnificent big bay which possessed both speed and endurance. The chestnut was a little vixen, but in the hands of Miss Mary was like a kitten. The big horse was staid and steady, but when aroused could make the ground fly under his feet.

"I understand," said the planter, as they prepared to start for school one day, "I understand the Yankee soldiers are in the neighborhood, and I want you to try and avoid them if possible, for they have a failing of 'trading hosses' whenever they have an opportunity of bettering their stock."

"I'd like to see 'em catch me," said Mary. "I could give 'em a two mile staht on a fough mile cou'se and beat 'em a mile an' a half."

"An' thah ain't nothin' can beat Big Ben," piped in Bascom, "'ceptin' Jennie," he added gallantly.

"Jennie and Ben may both be fast," said the planter, "but remember neither of them can beat a minnie ball when it decides to take paht in the race. Don't depend enti'ly on the swiftness of the hosses, but use a little judgment. You don't want to lose Jennie and I don't want to lose Ben, so be careful.

Both promised to exercise due caution and started out. They reached the school in safety, with not a sign of the despised Northerners. On the way back, the horses going at good pace, the lad dashed into a camp of blue-coated soldiers. For the first time he heard the "click, click" of a dozen Springfield rifles and the stern command:

"Halt!"

"Say, Bub, where in the devil are you going at that breakneck speed?" asked the sentinel.

"I'm goin' home, suh!"

"Want to trade horses?" asked a second.

"No, suh, they's not my hosses."

A rapid fire of questions were shot at him, with scarcely time for reply. Just then the commanding officer approached and the guard stood at attention.

"My son," said Colonel Caldwell, in a fatherly way, "have you seen any of our good Southern boys around here lately?"

"No, suh."

"Have you seen any Yankees, either?" he continued.

With all his fear and apprehension the boy could not refrain from smiling at the question. Who else, in those devastating times, with starvation staring them in the face, who else could afford bright, spick and span blue uniforms and polished guns with real bayonets excepting the Yankees?

"Not till I seen you-all, suh," he responded. "An' now, please suh, can I go on home? It's agettin' dahk, an' I don' know the road very well."

"But, Colonel," broke in the sentinel who had first challenged, "look what a durn good chance to trade horses and my old plug is most give out."

"Not with that boy," said the Colonel. "He has told us the truth and he is but a child."

Just pausing long enough to say, "Thank you, suh!" the boy chirped to the horses and in an instant was giving them a test of their best speed, almost expecting to hear the shots of the muskets and the singing of bullets as they ran. He told his story when he arrived at the plantation, and for a long time the planter sat in deep thought. Kindness, consideration and generosity, as displayed by Colonel Caldwell, did not agree with the pictures of Yankee avarice and harshness so freely circulated by the shrieking politicians.

That night the horses were safely hidden away where the Yankees might not see them and yield to the temptation to exercise their proverbial trading propensities. The family were unstinted in their praise of Clarke, and the women folk were inclined to pet him, to which proceeding he had serious objections.

He wanted to hurry up and be a man and anything that bore savor of coddling or pity was repugnant. Ah! when he was a man: He dreamed of the things he would do. Of course the family would all be together again and

what pleasure it would be in saying to them: "You needn't suffer for anything in the world. I'll take care of you." He would put his arms about his beloved sister Mary, who had loved him and cared for him like a little mother, and tell her how happy he was that he could take the burdens from her shoulders. And sisters Lucy, Addie and Annie would have a palace to live in, with all the "nigger" servants required to render work unnecessary. Brother Will would acknowledge him as an equal instead of the tagging "little brother," and the two of them would take their fine double-barrelled shotguns and go hunting together just as often as they pleased. It was too bad that the baby, Roberta Crockett Clarke,—born in Arkansas and named for Bob Crockett,—had died, for it would be fine to have her to play with and provide for. With sorrow he knew that he could not have his father and mother and grandfather and grandmother. But God had taken these and the best he could do would be to reunite the fragmentary family and take care of them.

Then, of course, all these dream plans would include his marriage with Fannie Waffords, a young lady then eleven years of age, whom he had selected as his life companion. Bob Waffords, the father, had not yet been apprised of the happy fate in store for his daughter, but when Bascom went up to him loaded with wealth and crowned with honors and demanded his daughter, he would be compelled to submit. Bob might remember when young Clarke proposed to shoot him for making threats against the favorite Clarke hog, which, with rare gift of selection, had chosen to eat up one of Waffords' baby goats. But all this would be waved aside in the "beautiful days to come," as beneath the dignity of a Clarke to remember, and Bob would be proud to turn to his neighbors and say:

"This is my son-in-law, Bascom B. Clarke, Esquire."

And so he dreamed and dreamed of the time when he should be a man, and the devil came and offered to make a man of him right away.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Old Man" Smith, a tanner by trade, lived in a place remote from the highway, where he had squatted on coming west from North Carolina. One Sunday morning Bascom was on his way to see his sister Mary, who was with a family who owned the grist mill which did the custom work of grinding for that neighborhood. As he came to the highway Smith was just passing with an ox-team, going toward the mill.

"Whah you-all goin', sonny," said Smith.

The boy informed him.

"Come on in the wagon an' ride, then, foh that's whah I'm goin'."

The loquacious Smith entered into immediate conversation.

"So youah fatheh was Colonel Clarke! So, ho! A mighty fine man! A mighty fine man! You-all can be proud to have such a man foh a fatheh! Whah you-all livin' now?"

The boy informed him. Now, it happened Smith was not specially fond of the Ramsdales.

"Oh, ho! What do you-all do theah? Jest strut aroun' an' ac' a 'ristocrat, I s'pose! They ain't nuthin' foh a man to do on one of them plantations. Even the niggers ain' what they used to be, ner what they was back thah in Nawth Ca'lina whah I cum from. It took men to handle the niggers back thah. They wan't none o' this wishy-washy stuff they have on plantations in Arkansas. Why, I've killed mo'n one of 'em makin' 'em toe the mark and wo'k. I was ovehseer on one of the biggest plantations in Nawth Ca'lina, an' it took some man to be a ovehseer in those days! What you goin' to do with yourse'f when you get growed up, ef you-all don' do nothin' to ha'den youse'f now? You-all air a sma't boy, too sma't to be

layin' 'roun' a plantation. They ain't nobody theah but a lot o' lollypaloosin' wimmen, an' they's too saft to make a man o' a boy. Now, if you-all was to my house, they'd be some chance o' youah bein' somethin' sometime. Why, my five year ol' boy's mo' o' a man than haff the planters' sons in the neighbo'hood. You'll nevah git ter be no man at Ramsedale's. Come on ovah and live with we-uns, an' you'll be a man afo' you know it. An' then you-all kin do big things."

It was wily bait, and it took a hold on the lad. To be a man and not wait the long, long years! Soon he was telling the old man his hopes and wishes, unburdening his soul to this evident sympathetic listener. And Smith was quick to take advantage of the knowledge thus obtained. He painted in glowing colors the great times they had, the opportunities for wealth, and the freedom from restraint accompanying the life led at the Smith place. The final result was that Bascom was persuaded to join fortunes with the Smiths.

It was a rough life into which he thus injected himself, and a striking contrast to the refinement, cleanliness and godliness of the Clarke household. It made Bascom homesick. Vicious tempers and blows were daily and hourly occurrences on the part of the man. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with brutality and ignorance. What a place in which to rear and train the future citizen of a great republic. Eight husky children, two or three sons-in-law, besides the "Old Man," formed the family. Quarrels were frequent, and it was but a short time before young Clarke found the glint of the life all worn off.

The old man, having no "niggers" to drive, drove everybody else who came under his power. His children were kicked and cuffed, beaten and scolded, and Bascom came in for his share. He might have retreated even then, but he had no place to go. He felt that he could not return to the Ramsdales, for he had deserted them for the Smiths and was ashamed to go back. He did not realize that they gladly would have forgiven him for leaving, and would not hold the ten-year-old boy to too strict a

standard in the exercise of judgment. But there was no one to advise him, so he made up his mind to bide his time and trust in God.

Nobody could take away the influence of the home. So he suffered in silence and accepted the conditions without murmur, believing that in time the way would be opened for him to better things. But the disappointment was intense when he saw the weeks go by and the promised nearness to manhood, which had been held out to him by "Old Man" Smith, failed to materialize, and he found himself still just little, lonely, homesick boy. But God was doing His work in His own way.

One night the "guerillas," who were more to be dreaded than the Yankees, because they preyed alike on friend and foe, made their appearance at the Smith place and captured the old man, proposing to kill him, ostensibly because he had not joined himself to the Southern cause. He escaped, and under cover of the night made his way to the Union lines, at DeValls Bluff, where he claimed to be a persecuted Union sympathizer and asked protection. The colonel told him the best protection he could give them would be the removal of the family from the neighborhood to some place up north, where they would be safe. This offer Smith eagerly accepted, for it would give him a chance to see the country without expense to himself, and if there was one thing more than another he thoroughly enjoyed, it was "movin' somewheres."

The second day thereafter, accordingly, Bascom Clarke was surprised to see his friend, Colonel Caldwell, who had interceded in his behalf when the sentries had halted him. The colonel, with three hundred cavalry from the Third Michigan, and a forage train of three six-mule teams and government wagons, appeared at the Smith farm, loaded up everything of value and drove through the blazing sun to DeValls Bluff, forty miles away, across Grand Prairie.

Back in the middle of the cornfield was an acre of watermelons just ready for picking. The milk from twenty cows had been churned in three big six-gallon stone jars and the buttermilk was fresh when the soldiers arrived.

The soldiers were hungry, for they had been living on hard tack and salt pork for months. After the few personal effects allowed were loaded in the wagons, the Colonel told Smith he couldn't haul the coop of chickens which were all ready for shipment, but took out three dollars in greenbacks and bought them from the old man. Then the soldiers were told about the melons and sweet potatoes back in the cornfield.

What a scene! Some made for the melon patch and others for the chickens. Old roosters, young pullets and everything of the sort were caught, killed and confiscated to the use of the invading forces of the United States of America. One soldier discovered the three jars of buttermilk. Down into a jar went his canteen and the consequent "blub, blub, blub" attracted the attention of others. Soon there was a good-natured rivalry over the possession of this delicacy. One soldier grabbed an almost empty jar and holding it up drank from it while a stream of buttermilk poured down both sides of his face. The artesian well was drained of water, the mules hitched to the big army wagons, the bugle sounded "Forward!" and the lad was on his way to the Union lines.

While the soldiers were in the melon patch, to which Bascom had piloted them, one of them had thrown aside his haversack, revealing among other things some WHITE BREAD! Ye gods! WHITE BREAD! He seized a piece and hardly waiting permission from its owner got his teeth into it.

"Keep her, bub, she's yourn. You showed us the melon patch, and you're welcome to the gun waddin'."

Gun wadding! Shades of Epicurus! What sacrilege! This was the kind of bread that Jesus meant when He spoke the words: "Give us this day our daily bread," according to young Clarke's firmly fixed opinion. It was the kind of bread for which his father returned reverent thanks, and the only kind that ever graced a Clarke table, before or since, except on rare occasions when wheat flour was not obtainable. Since the home had been broken up he had seen practically nothing but corn pone, and his

inherited and cultivated repugnance to that article of diet, so universally used in that region, and his long enforced abstinence from the bread of his fathers, put Bascom in a frame of mind where this white loaf represented the greatest possession on earth. He carefully cared for it, and in the army wagon all the way across the prairie, amidst the heat and dust, like a chicken choked on corn meal, he tried to swallow this delicacy of delicacies without any water.

At night the party were safe in the lines of the Union army at DeValls Bluff.

CHAPTER IX.

The camp at DeValls Bluff proved a great attraction to Bascom. Night had fallen when they arrived, and for a long time before they reached the town they had been passing the outposts. He had heard the challenge of the pickets and witnessed the giving of the countersign, that magic word which proved the friendly character of the party. He had seen the sentries step back, bring their guns to a "carry," and give the freedom of the road to the cavalcade with the refugees under its protection. Farther along they began to catch the twinkle of the campfires, and discern the shadowy figures around them, and then they suddenly found themselves in the midst of a tented city. The soldiers not on guard duty were lying around or sitting in groups singing, laughing and evidently thoroughly enjoying themselves, as though no such thing as war and the gore of battlefields ever entered their thoughts.

The refugees were assigned to quarters and given rations, which included, much to Bascom's delight, more white bread. Not until they appeared, however, did he dispose of the carefully preserved remnant of the loaf contributed by the soldier of the melon patch. But with plenty to eat and a safe place to stay, the boy soon forgot everything in the luxurious oblivion of childhood's sleep.

A cannon shot reverberated from bluff to bluff, and brought Bascom from his blanket to his feet. It was immediately followed by a long roll of the drums. Trembling with fear and excitement, and fully believing a battle was on and he in the midst of it, the lad made bold to ask a hurrying soldier if there was going to be a fight. The soldier laughed.

"No, bub, 'tain't no fight. It's jest mornin' gun and

revilly. It's jest a noisy way they hev of tellin' ye to get up and wash yer face and get ready for breakfast."

Bascom, his fears quieted, with great curiosity watched the soldiers form in line, heard the roll call and saw his grandfather's flag, the stars and stripes, lazily waving in the breeze of the hot summer morning. It was a great sight. Right at hand were his friends, Colonel Caldwell's cavalry, with the man who wanted to trade horses with him sitting like a statue on a fine specimen of genus equine. He evidently had succeeded in making a "trade" to his advantage, but the lad saw with satisfaction that neither "Jenny" nor "Ben" constituted the cavalryman's mount. After the events of yesterday, these men belonged to the boy and were invested with heroic attributes which would have brought a blush of pride to their bronzed cheeks had they realized it. Beyond the cavalry was the long line of infantry, and still farther along, the artillery.

To the boy who had witnessed the departure of the Mount Adams recruits, there suddenly came a doubt as to the certainty of Southern success in the conflict. These men seemed just as strong, just as devoted to their cause, and just as earnest in their convictions as his fellow townsmen. In his wondering eyes there seemed to be sodiers enough at DeValls Bluff to meet all the conditions of war, and he was glad Bob Crockett was not there, for even Bob, the criterion of bravery and military genius to Bascom, might be killed if he came in contact with this array of fighters. So interested was the boy that he was totally unprepared to see the lines melt away as suddenly as they had formed, and the men go back to their quarters for breakfast. He then remembered that he had not had his breakfast as yet, so he returned to join the Smith family, the members of which were already busily engaged in converting loyal rations into rebel tissue.

Truly a forlorn little creature he was,—homespun trousers, worn and frayed, held up by one "gallus," and a hickory shirt, completed the sum total of his raiment. He had no hat or shoes, so bareheaded, barefooted, and

lonely, he seemed driftwood on the sea of humanity. But in his heart was hope, youth's effervescence to the still waters of despair.

Old Man Smith began to talk about what he would do up North where he was going. He held the government responsible for the war and the war was responsible for his being an outcast among his people, and therefore he proposed to take advantage of the government's having him and his family on its hands. It seemed almost as though he believed the United States ought to give him a pension, so that he could live the rest of his days without work, in return for his compulsory banishment from Arkansas. To Bascom it was a serious situation. In the little cemetery at Mount Adams and scattered about the neighborhood, were all who ever loved him or cared what became of him. There were neither ties of sympathy nor comradeship between him and the Smiths.

One day an Arkansas farmer brought in a number of cattle to the camp for sale. A yearling steer escaped from the herd and went cavorting in every direction, defying every effort to capture it. The farmer, worn out in his efforts to catch it, finally offered two dollars to the parties who would secure the animal. Here was where Bascom's genius came in play. He held a hurried consultation with the Smith boys, and big "Bull," the head of the Smith pack of hounds, was called. The boys took him out where he could get a good look at the calf, and yelled in chorus:

"Sic 'em!"

The dog sized up the "critter," quickly judged what was wanted, and was off. The calf saw him coming, and with tail high commenced a zig-zag course through the camp streets, around the tents, past the headquarters, out into the open field and back again, stumbled over a tent rope, and was on his feet again, then doubled on his tracks and on like the wind. "Bull" knew his business, however, and watching his chance, made a dive and got the beast by the nose and held on. The steer shook, pawed, backed up and rushed forward, but could not

overcome the disadvantage of this clinging thing on the nose.

The boys by this time were close at hand and in a few minutes had the now thoroughly subdued steer roped and delivered to the owner. The two dollars reward was given to them and divided. Bascom's share was ten cents, which he proceeded to spend for gingerbread, a dainty that had so long been absent from his bill of fare that it seemed almost as if he must have dreamed that there was such a thing as gingerbread. He did full justice to the delicacy. It was well he did, for it was a long, long time before he had another taste.

For two weeks the refugees were within the Union lines at the Bluff, waiting for the coming of a transport bound down the river. The life of inactivity began to pall on them all. And it was a relief to everybody when the steamer Kenton, convoyed by two gunboats, poked her nose against the landing and made fast. Then all was hurry and bustle, for the Kenton was under orders to take on board the Second Indiana Battery, which was going home, its term of service having expired.

The refugees, who included several families besides the Smith contingent and quite a number of negroes, were to go on this boat also, this being the easiest way of ridding the army of the burden of their maintenance, and at the same time guaranteeing their safety. All of the white people in the party were suspected of being more or less in sympathy with the cause of the Northerners, and a mere suspicion was all that was necessary to endanger their lives if they remained. The armed bands of guerillas did not wait for an overt act in favor of the north, but often used a purely imagined Union sentiment as an excuse for murder and pillage.

This was clearly demonstrated in the case of Old Man Smith, for by no process of reasonable logic could he be called a Union sympathizer. But he was wont at times to harangue against the unequal distribution of wealth and inveigh against aristocracy. As a result his tongue would run away with itself and he gave utterance to

words in a spirit of braggadocio which could be twisted into criticism of the acts of the Confederacy. He knew personally many of the men in the guerilla band which had captured him and they knew he had recognized them. As they were outlawed by both armies, this information would probably result in serious trouble for them if disclosed. So Smith knew if they got him again he would have a very few minutes to live. Hence, he would rather take advantage of his false position as a Union sympathizer and thus escape certain death at their hands.

The fact that Bascom knew that he was not a Union man, from many things he had said in the freedom of his home, and the fear that the boy might in some way convey this knowledge to the military authorities, undoubtedly secured to young Clarke immunity for a time from the harsh treatment usually accorded him. Smith had been furnishing leather to the Southern Confederacy almost from the beginning of the war, and up to the time the blockade had made it practically impossible to dispose of his product, he had prospered to an unusual degree. Now, with the market for his leather gone, through the coming of the Union forces and the misunderstanding between himself and his old neighbors which imperiled his life, he was cunning enough to use the situation to his advantage and get out of the country under the protection of the flag he had despised.

Bascom had heard that they were to go with the "Hoosier" battery, so he went over to the quarters of these men to see what sort of a looking creature a "Hoosier" was, expecting to find something unusual in appearance. Not yet having had his mental machinery adjusted to Indiana standards, he could discern no special distinction, and was somewhat disappointed. Later in life, when saturated with Indiana spirit, he became so thorough a Hoosier himself that he, too, believed that God had used a little more of His likeness when he created the people of that commonwealth than when He made the rest of mankind. But that evolution or transition to

the high state of human perfection belonging distinctively to Indiana is properly another part of this story.

"Where's yer hat, bub?" asked one of the men whom he was watching getting his things together for the move.

"Lost it, suh," was the reply.

"That's too bad, by Josh! You 'n' your pa and the rest of the family 's goin' north with us, be yuh?"

"He ain't my father, suh."

"Ain't he? Where's your father? In the army fightin' agin us?"

"No, suh; my father, Colonel James Clarke, is dead, suh."

"By Josh, that's too bad. Where's your ma?"

"My mother's dead, too, suh."

"By Josh, that's too bad, son. Sure I'm sorry for you. But yer goin' north with us, ain't yuh?"

"Yes, suh, I reckon I am."

"By Josh, that's the boy! Come on up with us to old Indiana, where you'll have a chance to grow up and where there ain't nobody prouder'n nobody else. The common people up there 's all 'ristocrats, and the 'ristocrats is jest like you 'n' me. They reckon people by what they is, not what they pretend to be. We ain't much shakes on style, but we're an ace high royal flush when it comes to bein' right. When Adam and Eve got through with the Garden of Eden God gave the snake to South Carolina and set the garden down in Indiana. South Carolina wanted the snake and Indiana wanted the garden. You ain't ever been in Indiana, son, but stay with us, by Josh, and we'll show you what livin' is. I don't believe yuh ever eat a punkin pie in yer life, did yer? No, I thought not. Nobody never eat no punkin pie unless 'twas in Indiana. They have imitations other places, but there's as much difference between a Indiana punkin pie and what they call punkin pie other places, as there is atween a slipp'ry elm poultice and a mustard plaster. Fer a bruise that needs suthin' coolin' and soothin', a slipp'ry elm poultice is jest the thing. It'll make you forget you ever had a ache er a pain, and you'll drop off to sleep like a

nussin' baby. When yer in a terrible state they'll slap a mustard plaster on ye, and the dern thing'll begin to burn and blister and you'll beg 'em to take it off, but they'll leave it on till it hurts worse'n the original ache, and then you're supposed to be cured. An Indiana punkin pie 'll slide gently down, feeling good all the way, then it'll softly nestle itself in the cozy corner o' yer stummick and telegraph back to yer brain to quit worryin', everythin's all right; then it'll hum 'Home, Sweet Home,' and you'll go to sleep and dream of angels fannin' yuh softly with their wings and smoothin' yer hair back from yer forehead like mother used to do. And you'll wake up a new man. But you got to be tarnal hungry to eat the other kind. If you do, you'll wish you hadn't, and you'll feel so punk you'll forget you're hungry."

"Say, Bill," drawled his bunk mate, "shet down on yer aeolian harp and help me pack."

"All right, but wait a minit. I'm givin' a lesson on Indiana to a poor kid what don't know nothin' about it, and the packin' can go to thunder till I get through. We're goin' home, Jim, home to Indiana. Do you realize it? And this boy's mind's got to be put in shape to stand the shock of the change before we get there. Say, son, here's a cap for ye. I got a new one, and this one'll be all right for you, and you don't have to go bareheaded. You see that flag up there?" [pointing to the camp colors.]

"Yes, suh."

"Well, mind you touch that cap this way [indicating] every time you go by it."

"Yes, suh."

"Do you know what flag that is, boy?"

"Yes, suh, it's the flag my grandfather fought for in the War of 1812."

"By Josh, is that so? Say, Bill, here's a Yankee soldier by descent! Well, son, if your grandfather fit for that flag, it'll be good enough for you to live under, and it's the one good thing in this country that's just as good in any other place as it is in Indiana, though sometimes I think the air in Indiana makes its colors look brighter,

and the wind touches it a little more feelin'ly there than anywhere else in the United States."

"Come on, Jim, let's get this packin' done er we'll never git to Indiana."

Proud in the possession of his new head-gear, Bascom walked back and forth past the flag several times and brought his hand up in salute. From that time on it was his flag. On his return to the Smith family, various comments were made on his appearance, and some insulting remarks on the uniform it represented slipped out from more than one, but the old man stopped them quickly.

"No more o' that! Hang on to you-all pizen togues till we git somewheres."

The next morning the refugees went on board a transport, on which they found themselves mixed up with a lot of colored people. The old training was not gone, however, and the negroes kept to themselves and did not seek to mingle with the whites. The Indiana regiment marched on board with the fifes and drums playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The guns conveying the transport took their stations, and soon the order came to "cast off."

Just before the boat left, Mr. Elliott, at whose home Bascom's sister Mary was living, came on board and sought out the boy. Did he know how homesick the lad was? Could the man see the little chap's wretched pretense at being cheerful when his heart was breaking for the companionship and love of his own folk? Could it be possible Mr. Elliott was blind to the fact that the boy would go back with him even then, and was only waiting for the suggestion to be made? Quietly Mr. Elliott spoke:

"I've thought it all over, Bascom, and I can't advise you to stay. I don't know what theah is to stay for. God alone knows what is ahead of us. I believe theah is mo' to hope for up yonder where you-all are going, and I don't believe you'll forget you are a Clarke, and bear the name of good, honorable, Christian people. Whatever you are, and wherever you are, you will be either a credit or discredit to them. They have laid a foundation of good in-

fluence and good teaching. Anything else there is to you will be builded by yourself. Your sister sends her love and says to tell you she'll pray for you every day. Mary is a good girl, Bascom, and for her sake, as well as your own, keep your name clean. Good-bye and God bless you."

"Good-bye, suh," said Bascom, choking back the tears. "Tell Mary I won't forget, suh, and thanky for comin', suh!" The last word from home had been spoken. Mr. Elliott crossed the gang plank to the landing and as the boat swung into the stream he waved a farewell from the bank.

CHAPTER X.

Life on the Kenton was a novel experience to the refugees, for few of them had ever been "down the river" before. As the transport and protecting gunboats swung out into the stream they crowded the rail to watch the receding shore, and call or wave their farewells. The soldiers off duty were all on hand to give parting cheer to their Indiana comrades.

A great sense of loneliness came over Bascom. The noise and bustle of starting on their long journey, and the business of getting settled on the transport did not suffice to overcome the choky feeling in his throat. His face must have been mournful, indeed, for Jim Stone, the soldier who had given him the cap, hailed him:

"Say, Johnny, you look like yuh was goin' to yer own funeral. Ain't homesick a'ready, be yuh?"

"I ain't got a home," said the boy.

"Oh, yes, by Josh, I forgot. Well, if yuh ain't got no home yer headed jest the right way to git one. People don't have to be homeless in Indiana 'less they wants to. Yuh jes' keep a stiff upper lip, and yer eyes wide open, and yuh'll git along all right."

"Kin I git anythin' to do, suh?" inquired Bascom.

"Anything to do! Work! Why, work is so plenty in Indiana that I know a man who was chased so hard by it that he died. But he was one of the kind that was always afraid work would ketch him. If yer willin' to hustle and ain't particular to hunt fer soft-handed jobs you won't have to borry money to live on up there. What kin yuh do?"

"Anythin' any other boy can do, suh."

"Did yer ever shuck corn?"

"No, suh, but I kin learn."

"Sure yuh can, and it's some trade when its done right.

A good corn husker can earn good money. We'll be home before huskin' time and you'll hev a chance to get your hand in. 'Bout the first thing you'll need is a huskin' peg. Never seen one, did yer? No, o' course not. Well, a huskin' peg is as necessary to a Hoosier as a blade to a knife, and an Indiana man would as soon go away from home 'thout his shirt as to leave his huskin' peg behin'."

"Can I see yours?" asked Bascom.

An instant's hesitation, and a choke and a splutter, which sounded suspiciously like a smothered chuckle, and then:

"Oh, mine did you say? By Josh! You know I might 'a' been killed or took prisoner by you Johnnies while I was down here eatin' hardtack and chasin' graybacks, and I wouldn't want to carry along anything so valuable as my peg. You know some people use jest common pegs, made o' a piece of hickory with a leather thong to put yer middle finger through. But I was a prize winner at huskin' bees, and mine was made of ebony, gold mounted, with a diamond as big as a marble in the butt. Then I had a gold cord for the finger. I'm sorry, son, I haven't it here to show yer, 'cause 'twould make yer eyes stick out like cannonballs. I put it in the bank when I went into the army, for I thought 'twould look kind of queer fer me to be hevin' so expensive a ornament on my thirteen dollars per. Some of the expert shuckers hev pegs imported fr'm Africa, made out o' solid ivory and inlaid with pearls and precious stuns. A huskin' peg is a kind o' badge in Indiana, and no one is considered respectable without havin' one."

"Do yuh think I can git one, suh?"

"Well, by Josh, I'll make yer one, for I don't want you crossin' the line into the state without it."

And so, by the good nature and kindly consideration of the soldier, the mind of the lad was diverted from himself for the time. All the refugees began to make themselves as comfortable as they could for the long trip. They were crowded on the lower deck of the Kenton, and any-

thing like cleanliness was impossible. They had enough to eat, such as it was, hard tack and salt pork, but they had real coffee, which was to them nectar of the gods, so long had they been deprived of it. The buoyant spirit of the soldiers going home was infectious, and despite the discomforts of the journey good feeling reigned.

Bascom, as the boats went down the river, began to see familiar scenes along the shore, but was disappointed when darkness came before they reached Mount Adams, so he could not see the home town. Its twinkling lights seemed to signal him a farewell and bid him Godspeed. The memory of the happiness there and the graves in the cemetery surged upon him in the darkness, the tears crept out and rolled down his cheeks, and the stifled sobs shook the friendless waif.

"Oh, Mother!" he murmured. "I want you. I'm all alone."

He seemed to hear a voice softly saying:

"God is with you. You are in the hollow of His hand. Fear not!"

And sleep was upon him, mending his broken spirits, assuaging his grief and resting his body.

No chances were taken by the officers in charge of the gunboats and transport. All day long as they swung down the White River and up the Mississippi one gunboat was ahead and the other behind the transport. Bands of Confederate cavalry were still in evidence at times all through the country, and the guerillas and bushwhackers were alert to commit depredations. It was the enemy's country, making it advisable to use every precaution to avoid a surprise which would endanger the noncombatants as well as the soldiers on the transports. At night the boats were stopped, the gunboats lashed themselves on either side of the Kenton, and sentries paced the decks watching for the least sign of attack.

It was all very wonderful to Bascom. The soldiers going home were full of happiness at the thought of mingling again with their old friends. They gave him

wonderful accounts of the country and their word pictures were so glowing that he began to lose his homesickness and anxiously wait the time when he would see this marvelous part of the United States. Old Man Smith concluded that he and those with him would go to Indiana. Possibly the thought that it meant a longer ride and several weeks more with provisions furnished by the government helped him make his decision. But whatever his motive, he accepted the proposition and announced that they were all going through.

The gunboats, leading and following, were objects of great curiosity to the refugees, who now saw them for the first time near enough to note their construction. For the most part they were ordinary river steamers encased in sheet iron with armament consisting of brass cannon and mortars for throwing shells. Bascom, after his observation, congratulated himself on his wisdom in hurrying to a place of safety when they fired on Mount Adams at the time the Confederate cavalry attacked the up-bound fleet. The rows of guns sticking out of the port holes gave them the appearance of continually showing their teeth and being ready to fight at the drop of the hat. The refugee boy secretly hoped a challenge would come in some manner to call for a demonstration of "sassiness" on the part of these ironclads. His hope was gratified.

As the boats were slowly steaming up the Mississippi River, one afternoon, a man was discovered on shore waving a white flag. The captain of the gunboat leading the fleet was standing by the pilot house. He called to the man and asked him what he wanted.

"To be taken on board," was the answer.

Back of him were the bluffs covered with timber and underbrush. The captain took in the situation in an instant.

"We can't land here. Come around the next bend and we'll send a small boat ashore for you."

The man disappeared and the boats moved on. When the boats turned the bend, several hundred soldiers were discovered running back from the river's edge. The am-

buscade had failed and they were making good time to get out of range of the guns. The transport was ordered to the opposite shore and the two gunboats opened with their forward batteries. For a minute it thundered and solid shot and screeching shells rained hot on the trail of the flying squadron. Great clouds of dust showed where the cannon balls struck and ricocheted along the ground, with an occasional upheaval as a shell exploded. Talk about the noise made by the old cannon at Mount Adams! Why, it was scarcely a whisper compared with this!

The proper rebuke having been administered to the band that had so dishonorably used the flag of truce to decoy the boats into range for murder to be committed, the transport was again brought into the line and the vessels steamed on their way.

The refugee boy was eager to see DeSoto, Mississippi, when they passed, for here was the place where the Clarke family had crossed the river, on the journey from Virginia to Arkansas. It was the same little weather-beaten hamlet and he recognized it instantly. He found Jim Stone, the soldier, and pointed the place out to him. It seemed as though this one incident brought back with clearness all that long journey. DeSoto was particularly in his mind, for when the Clarke family was coming to this landing to cross on the ferry the air was literally alive with paroquets, a sight never forgotten by the boy. Stone led Bascom to tell the story of his life and adventures. With a willing and sympathetic listener the boy found his tongue wagging freely, and the depression which had threatened to overwhelm him was forgotten for the time. The soldier encouraged him and in his rough way inspired the boy with faith in himself.

"Don't you believe the world can lick yuh," he said. "It may git yuh down and blacken yer eyes, and maul yer up consid'ble, but yuh must always come back Johnny on the spot with yer flukes up and yer head high. Don't yuh never tell nobody yer licked, even if yuh think it yerself. Life is somethin' like a battle, son, and the world is like the enemy. You git ready to hit it and lay yer

plans ter lick it, but they attack in a place and at a time when yer least lookin' fer it, and yer got to change the hull dern plan.

“Over there at Pea Ridge, fer instance, Gen'l Curtis expected the rebs to attack him by way of Keatsville, and had all his fortifications aimed that way. The rebs, not bein' considerate, however, came by way of the Bentonville road, an' hit the rear o' Curtis' army. Now, no-buddy but a genius could 'a' switched his hull dern army 'round and pointed it 'tother way, and win. And do yer know what Gen'l Sigel did in that battle? That old Dutchman found himself with six hundred men and one battery nearly surrounded by Johnnies, who outnumbered him ten to one. It happened the road to Sugar Creek, where Curtis was, wound around among the hills and through dense woods. Sigel divided his force into two parts, each havin' half the battery. One half took its stand with its half of the battery at a bend in the road, with most of the men and the battery hid by the trees. The other half hustled jest as fast as their leg's 'd carry 'em up the road a mile er so, and got the same kind o' place. The reb cavalry come runnin' their nags up the road, fully believein' they'd only ter put out their hands and nab the bunch. They had a s'prise party when they come 'round that first bend, and the cannon and muskets opened on 'em. O' course they stopped. Who wouldn't? And while they was guessin' at what hit 'em this first three hundred men grabbed their guns and folloed the cannons and cais'ns up the road past the second detachment, and a mile er so beyond, and then they'd halt and plant theirselves to wait till the other fellers hed got through takin' a swipe at the horse jockeys and hed got inter position behind 'em. Then they'd take their turn at shootin' and runnin'. Old Man Sigel would s'lect the place fer the plant, then he'd go down ter see how things was gettin' on at the scrap. Then he'd shove 'em up the road, stayin' till the last ter see that everythin' was done; go through and s'lect the place fer the next stand, and so on, back and forth, 'till he brung the hull

dern bunch, by Josh, the hull ten miles an' reported for duty 's though nuthin' had happened. The feller 't wrote 'Forred, the Light Brigade,' what I hed to read when I was in school, didn't know 'bout Old Sigel er he might 'a' added a verse 'bout him.

"Howsumever, what I am gettin' at is that yer ain't allus licked when yer runnin'. If the world gets a swipe at ye, and yer go down, it don't allus wait fer the count but goes and stan's on the corner and brags 'bout what it's done to yuh. Take enough of the count tuh git yer breath, and then hunt fer the solar plexus again. Change front when yer think it advisable, run when it's needin' better ground to fight on yer are, and when they're standin' round tellin' how they licked ye they're the best meat fer yuh. Like a boa constrictor the world'll sometimes gorge itself on the spoils o' yer labor, and then go to sleep. Let 'em hev the things they git away from yuh, and don't waste any time wailin' erbout 'em, er let anybuddy know yuh miss 'em, but swipe 'em in er place they ain't lookin' fer, and be ready to change front. If yuh kin find somethin' the world says can't be did, do it, fer the path with the least travel sometimes has the most good fruit. Curtis and Sigel at Pea Ridge didn't sit down and mourn, and surrender, because things didn't come as they planned. They took things as they was and hammered them into victory. Yuh may think the Old Man up there has his foot on yer chair, but He ain't. He'll not stack the cards on yuh, ner shift the cut, but yer'll git a square deal all the time. He ain't ter blame for the crookedness in the world, and ef yuh git treated crooked, and ye've got the grit to keep on, and yer'll keep clean and square yuh needn't be afraid God's goin' ter let yuh be licked."

"I ain't afraid to work, suh, ef I kin git anythin' to do."

"You needn't fear erbout that. Take the first job that comes ter hand that's honest. Make the most of it. Talk more about work than yuh do 'bout wages. Keep yer eyes open and see everything. Keep yer mouth shet 'cept

to ask questions. Don't give no advice ter the feller yer workin' fer 'less it's asked. Do yer work es he says it is tuh be did, even ef yuh think yer way's the best. Yuh kin experiment with yer own way when yer the boss an' hev to pay for it. Let the boss scold and splurge and spit cuss words ef he wants tuh, once in a while, and yuh keep yer mouth tight shet, 'less he reflects on yer character. Jest think thet you'll be big enough ter lick him some day, and postpone the talkin' back till yuh kin lick him. By that time you'll feel sorry fer him, and like's not yuh'll loan him money, and buy him somethin' t' eat. Yuh'll hev to hoe yer own row, but ef yuh git in a pinch and need a friend call on me."

"Yes, suh, thanky, suh. I'll be glad to have you-all as a friend, suh. But I want to make my own way."

"And I want yuh ter do it, son. Any place what yer git in this life what yer don't earn ain't worth much either to them what gives or them what gits. Yer depend on yerself, and though yer'll get some hard jolts yuh'll find a place yuh fit in. Ef yer a square peg it'd bruise yuh some ter get yuh in a round hole, and vicy versy, as old 'Squire Lathrop used to say. You may not find the place in life yuh belong in for a long, long time, but yuh keep goin'. Any road yuh take leads to success, if yer doin' the best yer know how, knowin' all yuh kin l'arn, ain't lookin' fer no admirin' procession and ain't wonderin' all the time how much money there is in it. A man nearly always loses who is continually sizin' up the pot and comin' in without lookin' at his hand. Yuh got to use some jedgment in life, and yer own jedgment on what yuh kin do er can't do is better than the other feller's, 'cause if yuh got common sense and foller yer own jedgment and fall down yuh'll wonder why and study a way ter make a killin' the next time. But ef ye've taken the other feller's jedgment and missed fire yuh'll charge it up ter the ammunition, 'stead o' layin' it ter yer own ignorance of how to load the gun. Don't yuh be afraid of nobody. When yuh see people worshippin' some man as though God had speecially created him, and he treats

people as though God made them fer his special benefit, take a second er a third er a fourth look, and yuh'll see he's cut hisself when he shaved, er his necktie ain't on right, er he eats with his knife, er does somethin' what shows he ain't nuthin' but human. Then, don't worship him. But if he's right, admire him; if he's wrong, pass him by. Don't try to copy nobody. An imitation ain't worth much. Be yerself, boy, and then folks'll say: 'There comes Clarke and a bunch of fellers.' If yer copy-in', jest imitatin', nobody never sees yer come er knows yer gone."

"Yes, suh," said Bascom.

"Well, by Josh, yuh know I got to runnin' along tell I mighty near was preachin'. Anyhow, I like to talk to yuh, son. Yuh couldn't be a better feller tuh listen ef yuh was paid fer it. I wasn't thinkin' how young yuh was, but I b'lieve at that yuh understand what I was drivin' at, didn't yuh?"

"Yes, suh. My grandmother told it to me, suh. She said it was all in that verse, 'Fear not,—foh ye shall reap if you faint not.'"

"By Josh, yuh've hit it exact. Shake, son. I'm short on Bible an' long on 'sperience. You're long on Bible and short on 'sperience. May we both get more of what we're lackin'."

The boy looked up into the kindly, grizzled face, and instinctively knew he had a friend. The pressure of that handclasp braced the boy to two resolutions: To be forever four-square to the world and to merit true friends.

The costly results of the war were brought to the attention of the refugees by a stack of coffins on the forward deck of the Kenton. They contained the remains of officers who had been killed in the trans-Mississippi campaigns, and whose bodies were being sent home for burial. It was a grewsome sight at best, while to the negroes and some of the superstitious whites it proved a serious interference with peace of mind.

"War may be all right," said Stone to Bascom, one day, as he found the boy contemplating the pile of coffins, "but the fellers who bring on the trouble are not usually the ones who reach an untimely end and go home to their friends in a box. Yuh may be fightin' for principle, and be as brave as yuh can, but it hurts here [pointing to his heart] when yuh miss yer bunkmate after a scrimmage and go huntin' fer him, only to find his lifeless body. No money can pay fer a widow's tears or a orphan's sobs fer the man that don't come back. I'm goin' home, but I've got to tell Mrs. Sheffield 'bout Tom, and I've got to go and see old Mrs. Williams and put my arms around her neck and break the news of her only son's death. She held me on her lap when I was a baby, and she's "Aunty" Williams tuh the hull town. I'd ruther go back and fight some more than do it, but it's got to be did. Some day they'll come to believe that jest killin' each other don't settle nothin'. If I hev a difference with my neighbor they make me go to court and get it fixed accordin' to law, but a nation won't take the kind of medicine it prescribes fer its people, and sets men to commit murder on one another to prove who's right and who's wrong. I ain't a blamin' nobuddy special, but I can't see why the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' ain't jest as much Bible talk fer a nation as 'tis fer a man. Killin' has got ter be so common thet a stack of filled coffins like that don't cause no more talk than a pile o' cordwood. And they've had so many funerals that the tear-water o' the nation's nearly run dry. I can't help feelin' sorry for the Johnnies. They're fightin' on their own sile, but they ain't got enough to eat even at that. The fellers what stirred up the muss ain't carryin' the muskets and fillin' the graves—they're mostly doin' their fightin' with their mouths, and keepin' their eyes on the offices they're goin' ter hev when they win. And the fellers in the ranks will go home, those o' them what's permitted by Divine Providence ter git home, and they'll go to the polls and proudly cast their wad o' paper fer the mouth patriots.

“What’ve the poor devils of privates in the south got at stake in the hull dern percedin’, anyway? They ain’t got no slaves, and they don’t own no big plantations. If they sh’d win they’d have less chance than they did before, ’cause the planters ’d be like a lot o’ little kings and these fellers what make the common soldiers ’d be jest as poor as they was before, and no way ter git up. If we win and slavery is did away with they’ll start on an even footin’ with everybuddy else, and if they wantter be somebuddy and hev their children somebuddies they stand a show. Yer see, if we win they’ll all be poor, everybuddy, and bein’ poor together ’ll bring ’em closer ter one enuther. I ain’t got no bitter feelin’s again ’em. It’s like defendin’ yerself agin a boy that’s got stirred up by the older fellers eggin’ him on to fight yer. He ain’t got no grudge again yuh, and he ain’t goin’ ter git nuthin’ if he licks yuh. Yuh hev to fight in self defense, but yuh feel sorry fer the kid and when it’s over and yer lick him if yuh treat him right yuh kin make him yer closest friend. ’Twill take him a little time to find out that the fellers what egged him on wasn’t doin’ nuthin’ fer him, and maybe he’ll sometime sleep under the same blanket with yer and help yer lick somebuddy else. If Old Glory wins I’ll bet yer anythin’ these same fellers what’s fit fer the South in this war will foller her all the rest o’ their days, and be jest as proud o’ her as we are now. And sometime they’ll come to know that Abe Lincoln’s their best friend today. But the dern politicians kick up such a dust that a good man’s goodness is hid till he’s dead, if he happens to get elected to some place somebuddy else wanted. I was fer Stephen A. Douglas fer president, I was, and I’m proud o’ the way he’s stood up ter be counted fer the Union since. He didn’t go home and sulk when Lincoln beat him, but went right over and took his place ’side Old Abe, and said: ‘Here am I, Old Man, ready to help.’ Takes a man ter do that, sonny.”

“My father was foh Stephen A. Douglas, suh.”

“Well, by Josh! I thought there was some reason why I tuck tuh yer. Now I know what ’tis. Well, if yer

father was fer Stephen A. Douglas and Stephen A. Douglas is fer Abe Lincoln and the stars and stripes yuh ain't got fur to go yerself to git on our side o' this difficulty. And I ain't goin' ter influence yer in the least. Jest because we're takin' yer up north where yer'll be safe don't make the right er wrong o' the perceedin'. Yer old enough ter obsarve and think fer yerself and tain't no time to criticise the political opinions of a man when he's yer guest. With yer gran'father in the War o' Twelve and yer father votin' fer Douglas and yer own self pertected by the flag of the United States I'll take my chances on yer blood bein' right. I can't say I blame a man for follerin' his state, and I s'pose a slave state 'd be broke in two if she didn't jine the reb side. Poor Maryland! She's a slave state and she's in the Union, so she loses either way the war goes."

And so Stone talked to the boy all the long days of the journey, counseling and advising him, and with his homely philosophy preparing the mind of the boy for the struggle for existence and advancement. Bascom came to see the possibility of rising from poverty and humbleness to a place of usefulness in the world. He had plenty of time to think, and he laid a mental foundation of industry and perseverance.

The boat touched at Memphis. He beheld this Southern gateway in the hands of the Federal troops. Its fortifications held the cannon of the Yankees and the gunboats lay in the river at her feet ready for action. From the staff of the court house the Union flag floated, and soldiers were everywhere. At this point the refugees were transferred to another transport, together with the bodies of the soldier dead, and again convoyed by tinclads made their way up the river to Cairo, Illinois, the western base of supplies of the United States.

To the wondering eyes of the refugees, who little comprehended the magnitude of the contest, Cairo was a marvel. Seated upon its hills at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, with its fortifications bristling with cannon, it presented an extremely imposing ap-

pearance. River craft of all descriptions, gunboats, transports, big passenger steamers, and a motley collection of smaller boats were lying at the landings or running to and fro and up and down. Hurrying trucks were carrying stores from the great warehouses to the waiting lower decks of the vessels for shipment to the battling hordes in the south. Soldiers were filing on board the transports for conveyance to the front to take their part in the great struggle. Horses for the officers and the cavalry crossed the gang planks. Cannon and caissons for the batteries rumbled grimly along the dock and into places on the boats, and it seemed as if they were anxiously waiting the time to thunder destruction. Mortars tilted their wide-gaping mouths skyward as they were hauled on board and seemed to give a savage grimace as they disappeared from view. Huge boxes of ammunition of all kinds, together with small arms of every description and a miscellaneous assortment of camp equipment were piled high on the transports. Altogether it was a continuous panorama of bustle and excitement.

The landing of the refugees and the soldiers, and the transfer of the great pile of coffins to the landing, was scarcely noticed, although to both classes of the living it was a momentous occasion. The soldiers were going home to take up again the usual avocations of life and contend with the world for a place, back where they were known; the non-combatants were going into an unknown land, most of them in wretched poverty, and were wondering what the future held in store for them. Cheered, however, by the loyal declarations of hospitality made by the returning soldiers, the refugees felt that in these men, at least, they had friends who would stand sponsor for them until they could get a foothold among the strangers.

It was a proud time for Old Man Smith. He had the transportation and subsistence order for twenty. With great dignity he headed the procession and ordered its "downsittings and uprisings." So fearful were most of them of losing him and thus being without the proper credentials that they stuck closer than children around the

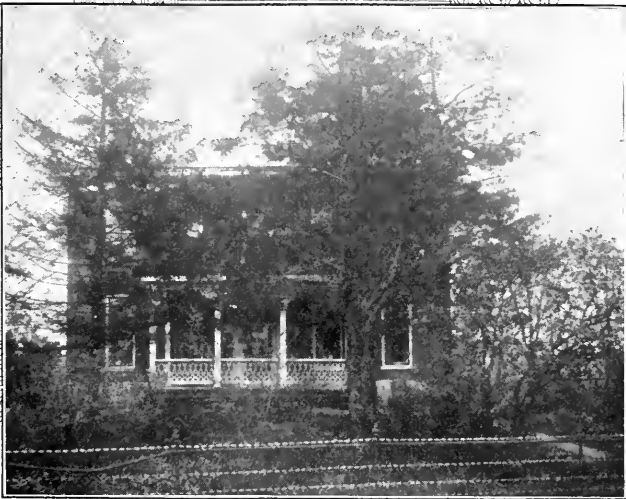
"lasses candy wagon" at the county fair. What few personal belongings they had they carried around with them wherever they moved, hence the sight presented by them, while interesting, was not especially calculated to inspire admiring comments. For ten days they had been crowded together on the transports, the decks of which had evidently not been cleaned since the war began.

Ragged, dirty and forlorn indeed they were, and covered with vermin with which the transports were infested. There had been no opportunity to properly care for themselves. They were dejected and homesick, though they realized they were homeless. Bascom, with his two garments and old brimless army cap, was as well equipped so far as raiment was concerned as any of the others. Some of the people at least were from the upper walks of life and felt their present pitiable condition. They sought to keep away from the gaze of the populace. But the residents of Cairo had evidently had their curiosity satiated by similar delegations and there was neither ridicule nor rudeness on their part during the short time the refugees were in the city.

Young Clarke and the Smith boys had managed to get out of sight for a time and had regaled themselves with a swim in the Ohio, and narrowly escaped a thrashing at the hands of the self-constituted leader of the expedition for being "absent without leave." But he was too busily engaged in "bossing" his flock at the time, and later it escaped his memory. The boys, refreshed and clean, would not have begrudged a few whacks just to have had the opportunity to sport in the water. While disrobed Bascom had taken the time to go over his shirt and trousers and rid them as best he could of the clinging vermin. Naturally cleanly and with a training that led him to look upon such a condition as a disgrace, he scrubbed, scoured and picked until he was comparatively free from the repulsive parasites. Jim Stone, who had come across him while thus engaged, sagely remarked:

"If I hadn't aknowed yer story, son, I'd aknowed yer was brung up right by yer anxiety to chase graybacks.

Those fellers'll make a chap show his ancestry and immejit fambly quicker'n anythin' else in the world. If a feller come up to me and I really and truly wanted to know whether all the airs he was puttin' on was genooine er not I'd sick a grayback on him. If he didn't color up and look ashamed, and hunt for a quiet place where he could retire fr'm public gaze fer a time, I'd know he was a sham. Yer'll find er lot o' human vermin adurin' yer life and the human grayback's some schemer. Yer got ter keep huntin', same's yer mother used to go through yer hair with a fine tooth comb erbout once in so often. Sometimes yer'll git in er place where ye can't help bein' bit by 'em, like you've been on those transports. No matter how clean yer was kept yer mother used to examine every pull of the fine tooth comb, and maybe sometimes, not orfen, yer'd see her stop, look close, and ye'd hear a little 'crack' like that. She'd say: 'My! My!' and then she'd pretty near dig yer scalp orf. Ever been there? Yes, I thought so. Well, sonny, jest remember: The dirtier yer think, act er talk the more o' the human graybacks yer'll hev erbout ye. If yer think right, talk right and act right they won't hurt ye much, though once in erwhile they'll git er whack at yer even then. I got more respect fer a 'squito then I has fer the grayback, human er otherwise. The 'squito sings yer a little song and tells yer he's comin' ter live off yer, and if yer don't want him yer'll whack at him, and he'll go 'way cussin' in a high key. But a grayback waits till yer ain't alookin', then he finds a little dirt in yer life thet ye've overlooked, and perceeds ter make himself ter hum. If yer don't oust him quick he'll wig-wag ter all the rest o' the tribe, and before yer know it 'twill take a thunderin' lot of cleanin' ter red yerself of 'em. 'Tain't no disgrace ter have a human grayback light on yer and snuggle up ter yuh, but it's a sign yer wrong if he finds the quarters comf'table. Yuh ain't got no easy time ahead o' yuh, boy, and yer got ter watch out er the graybacks 'll get yuh. But yuh jest think all'er time about how yer mother and father and grandmother 'd hev yer do, and yer'll come through O. K."



MOTHER NOBLE'S HOME



TENANT HOUSE ON NOBLE FARM

CHAPTER XI.

Three miles southwest of Indianapolis, on the Madison pike running alongside the J. M. & I. branch of the Pennsylvania railroad, is a beautiful place containing several hundred acres. This was the home of Lazarus Noble, a good man. This is all the description necessary to bring to mind the qualifications he possessed. He belonged to the class of genuine people, whose influence is far-reaching, and who, without ostentation, move the world up toward better conditions. Well fitted to be his helpmeet was his wife, Harriet. Her sweet, tender, sympathetic nature made the complement to her husband's generous impulses, and together they lightened more than one burdened soul and smoothed pathways that otherwise would have been too rough and hard for weary feet. Anything in the line of human suffering appealed directly to them both, and they knew no rest until so far as they were able the suffering was alleviated.

Mr. Noble was a strong supporter of the Union at a time when strong, courageous men were needed to stem the tide of disloyalty which cropped out here and there in Indiana. Notwithstanding the strict loyalty of the state to the Federal government, there was an undercurrent of sympathy with those who were fighting against its integrity. And here, as well as elsewhere, were those who, by every device or process known to their poisoned minds, were giving aid and comfort to the enemies of their country while too cowardly to go south and join those who were making an honest fight in the open in support of principles which they believed to be right. Men like Lazarus Noble, whose firm, unflinching patriotism held like a rock when there was a tendency on the part of any of the community to drift away from absolute, unquestioned and unquestioning loyalty, such men shaped the

sentiment and kept the great state true to the line of devotion to the Union.

His broad vision swept beyond the carplings of the critics who mistook their biting words of sarcasm, in discussing the conduct of the war, for weighty analyses of the situation. He saw the great problems to be solved, the necessity for a giant hand and heavy blows to forge again the broken fragments of the republic into a cohesive whole. The Titian task and its means of accomplishment were too large for the little minds to comprehend. And the little minds, it was, that set their tongues wagging and their hands writing those things which influenced other little minds and stayed a more speedy end to the conflict. Hence, it was well that such sturdy men as Lazarus Noble lived. Sober reasoning and calm judgment negatived the effect of the mouthings of the frothspewers, and the state held fast.

When it became known that a band of refugees, forced from their homes by reason of their allegiance to the Union, had landed in Indianapolis and needed help, the Noble family was among the first to offer assistance. It was corn-cutting time and help was scarce, so thoroughly had the war drained the country of able-bodied men. Near the Noble mansion and on a part of the estate was a frame dwelling house. At the instance of Mr. Noble, three families, including Smith and his retinue, went to live in this tenant house, while all in the party who could wield corn-cutters went into the fields to work. Bascom was among the number. While not presuming to vacate his assumed position as overseer of the party Old Man Smith himself worked with the rest. So long had they been confined on the transports and trains that they all welcomed activity.

The jug of water, which had been taken to the field, having been exhausted, Bascom was sent to the big brick house to replenish it. While he was drawing the water, Mrs. Noble came out to him. She could not help smiling at the nondescript figure he cut in his ragged homespun trousers held up by tow-string suspenders, and his peak-

less soldier cap. But his apparent destitution appealed to her sympathetic heart. He did not see her at first, but when she spoke he stopped short, turned around and instantly grabbed off his cap with an inborn courtesy that touched her with its genuineness.

"How are your folks getting along, my boy?" she asked.

"I ain't got any folks heah, ma'am," he answered.

Surprised, she said:

"Why, aren't these Smiths your folks? You came with them, didn't you?"

"I'm with 'em, ma'am, but I'm not of 'em. I'm a Clarke, ma'am."

"But where are your father and mother, boy?"

"Both of 'em air dead, ma'am."

The eyes of the good woman filled with tears as she drew from the lad his personal history, and he told of the sisters back in Arkansas who didn't know where he was, of the happy home now broken and the poverty which had come to be his lot. Her heart warmed to him. She said:

"Dear me! You've certainly had your share of trouble for the short span of your life. Let us hope there are better days ahead."

She laid her hand on his tousled head and drew him to her, telling about her own boys, now south fighting for the Union, and how proud she was of them. She told him how glad she was that she could do something to help him.

"But my folks is Southe'ne'hs, and my brother is in the Confederate army now, fightin' you-all," said Bascom, as if he had no right even to the kindness of Mrs. Noble, and especially if her boys were fighting on the other side.

"What difference does that make? To me you aren't a Southerner or a Northerner, but just a poor little lonesome boy and I'm going to do by you as I know your angel mother would have done by my boys if the positions were reversed. Come with me."

He went with her into the big house. There she took

him in the kitchen, and scrubbed him until he shone in his freshness. Then she rigged him out in a suit of clothes belonging to one of her own boys, gave him a big slice of hot mince pie, filled his jug with water and sent him back to the field.

Smith saw him coming and started toward him, evidently with the intention of punishing him for being gone so long, but he stopped short and stared in amazement as he beheld the transformation from the ragged, disconsolate boy who left the field to the bright, clean, well clothed youngster who returned.

"Whah'd you-all git them close?" he demanded.

"The lady at the big house give 'em to me," answered Bascom.

There was an instant's pause during which the boy waited for the usual pounding which Smith seemed to rejoice in giving him. But to his surprise the old man gave a grunt which might be interpreted to mean anything, grabbed the jug and turned back to his work. He was cunning enough to know that if the boy had found favor at the big house anything which might be done to him would probably militate against Smith himself in his relation to the Nobles.

This little touch of human kindness, at a time when the world was dark and the way uncertain, was just the thing needed to make him forget his environment, rise above it in spirit, and determine to merit the friendship of this good woman. She did not realize it until he told her of it long afterwards, but she did as much by this one act to inspire him with courage and patience to meet the future as was done by any person in the world. He felt that as yet he was helpless in the hands of the Smiths and he submitted to the beatings and harsh words of the old man because he didn't know where to go if he left. He was afraid that wherever he did go Smith would follow, claim him and make his life even more intolerable than it was before. He tried to bear it all with fortitude, and seemed to grow stronger both mentally and physically, despite the handicap of his surroundings.

There was plenty of work, and the Smith family went from one job to another, the recompense for all labor going into the pockets of the old man. While he had come north as a Union refugee, he had not been long in his new home before his tongue ran a little too freely, and left room for suspicion that his sympathies and hopes were with the south. This suspicion grew apace, and was fed by his indiscreet and boastful utterances.

The kindness of the Yankees to Bascom seemed to give him especial cause for brutality. At one time he took hickory withes, roasted them over a fire to toughen them, and flogged him with them until the boy's back was covered with great welts. This came to the ears of some of the neighbors and they positively declared to Smith through a delegation sent for that purpose that any further acts of that kind on his part would result in immediate and summary punishment at the hands of the men in the neighborhood. Though his tongue continued its lashings, that was the last time he laid hands on the child while in that neighborhood.

Disloyal to his own people in the South, he now demonstrated his disloyalty to the people who had befriended him. He moved from one community to another in order to escape the just results of his words and deeds. His family, who had lived in almost constant fear of his violent temper, and who shared their home with Bascom, came to give the boy their friendship, and sympathize with him in their way, though scarcely daring to manifest any unusual interest in him for fear of the consequences to themselves. The oldest girl, who was the housekeeper, did what she could to make the life bearable. The children imbibed the spirit of the times, and were not interested to any great degree in the war or its problems. They were anxious about the quantity of provisions which might come their way.

They had no philosophy of life and were fired by no great ambitions. They belonged to the class of people who were satisfied and contented if the fates decreed that they should have enough to eat, something to wear and a

place to stay. Whether or not they had ever heard of the scriptural injunction, "Take no thought of the morrow," they obeyed it to the letter. Their life in Arkansas had been spent largely in the open, and so, outside of dodging the blows of the father, or keeping out of his way as long as possible when he manifested a disposition to use the rod of discipline, they were care-free and without sense of responsibility.

Bascom began to thirst for an education, for a greater knowledge than his situation was liable to yield him. Outside of what his good grandmother had taught him and the few weeks in the private school which were interrupted by the coming of the war, he had had no opportunity to study. He read everything he could and absorbed the word and thought, but had no one to direct his energies along the line of systematic training. He seemed hedged in by an environment from which he was too young to break forth. Oftimes he was discouraged and tempted to drift with the rest, but the early lessons of industry and determination would assert themselves, and he highly resolved to conquer and "remember that he was a Clarke," born to hold a higher place in life than a drifter with the stream.

In "corn-shucking" time he learned to deftly slip the golden ear from its envelope by the aid of a hickory peg. There came to him visions of the ebony and ivory pegs described by the soldier friend, but he soon realized that this was a fairy story concocted for his entertainment, and laughed to himself. But he was an expert with the little instrument and, though his fingers were stiffened by the frosty atmosphere at times, he kept pace with the older ones in the task. Then, too, he was to go to school that winter, and the thought of it made him happy, for he would have a chance to learn something and equip himself for a bright future. Notwithstanding his deprivations and the hardships of his life under the domineering, tyrannical Smith, he never lost his courage or his ambition. Smith had promised that the children should go to school during the winter. Illiterate himself, he was al-

ways going to educate his family. Clarke little realized that the children were used to this promise and its oft-repeated breaking. He took the old man at his word, and anticipated the winter at school with great joy.

When school was "took up" in the little red schoolhouse near the Noble farm, a delegation from the Smith household was on hand. The children were armed with an assortment of school books, evidently bought cheap at some secondhand store, or begged from the discard of old educational books in people's houses round about. Bascom drew a copy of Fox's Arithmetic, so old that it was unknown in Indiana, and an old bluebook speller of an obsolete brand. With these books and five sheets of foolscap paper he marched proudly to the schoolhouse to begin work when the term opened. The teacher looked at the relics of long-gone generations in the school and indited a polite note to the head of the Smiths, containing a list of the books necessary for each. This was carried home by one of the older children.

Upon being made aware of its contents, the old man went into a rage and started immediately for the house of the school director living near. Here he exploded a torpedo or two of expletives intended to convince the man of the greatness of Smith, and his right to have his children educated with whatever books he desired to equip them. The director patiently tried to explain to his visitor the necessity of having uniform text-books, but Smith scarcely listened, and, his importance not being conceded, stalked home and took his children out of school as a punishment to the community. The community survived the shock but the Smith family once more saw the winter pass without an opportunity to go to school.

To Clarke this was a keen disappointment, for now that this door of knowledge was closed to him he saw no other opened and thus the way to an education seemed barred to him. With no help he took his odd times and tried to master the intricacies of the Fox's arithmetic, and worked at the words in the old speller until he could

nearly spell them backwards, but it was uphill work and he had no encouragement. Besides, the physical labor demanded of him by Smith was such as to make him too weary to spend much time with his books. More than once he fell asleep with his head in the arithmetic or speller, as, in the evening, after a hard day's work, he tried to study.

Smith had taken a contract to cut cordwood for Mr. Noble, so when the fiasco of sending the family to school was over he turned the boys loose in the woods at this work. Thus, Bascom, instead of getting an education or a start in that direction, spent the winter pulling one end of a cross-cut saw, cutting logs into four-foot lengths and swinging a "nigger maul" splitting them into proper size.

If discipline to meet discouragements, rebuffs and apparent insurmountable barriers were what was needed to develop his physical and moral strength he was certainly getting all that was necessary. A less determined nature would have concluded that the tide of misfortune was too strong to be stemmed and might have given up. On the contrary, the more adversity sought to stifle his ambitions the more his buoyant nature asserted itself. No Clarke should be crushed by either poverty or oppression. So he endured, worked, suffered and waited.

As the cold weather approached the question of shoes for the barefooted orphan began to assert itself. He had no money, and there seemed little prospect of obtaining any, as the waiting hand of his self-appointed guardian was always interposed between the boy's labor and the wages received therefor.

While in Indianapolis one day, when the frosty atmosphere bit his toes, he determined to pledge his own credit for leather enough to make him a pair of shoes. Going into the place of business of Joseph K. Sharpe, he sought out the proprietor.

"Will yuh trust me foh leather enough foh a pair of shoes, suh?" he asked.

Sharpe looked him over for a full minute, but the boy stood the scrutiny unflinchingly.

"Haven't you any money, boy?" he asked.

"No, suh."

Then followed a series of questions which brought out the story of the events which led up to his plight. The heart of the man was touched.

"I'll give you the leather, son."

"If you please, suh, I don't want it thataway. I'll pay foh it ef you'll trust me."

"I like that spirit, son, and you can have the leather and pay me when you can. I'd gladly give it to you, but your independence shall be respected. To whom shall I charge it?"

"To Bascom B. Clarke, suh."

The leather was given him and the charge gravely made on the book. Soon he was the proud possessor of a pair of shoes against the coming of winter. The debt was afterwards paid, though it meant much sacrifice and self-denial on the part of the lad.

By the spring of 1865 Smith found things so warm for him in the Noble neighborhood that he concluded it was time to move. His treatment of the little orphan boy in his custody and his anti-Union talk had made him exceedingly unpopular. He thought it was best to leave for new fields before the threats of violence which were freely made were put into effect. Conscious of having been ungrateful to the people who had befriended him, and to the government which had rescued him from probable death, he concluded that just at that juncture a change of scene to where he was not known would be preferable.

So, with the family and young Clarke, not forgetting the hound dog, "Bull," a most important adjunct of the house, he migrated. The atmosphere of Clark's Hill, where he first stopped, not proving to his liking, he again pulled up stakes and lighted on a small farm a few miles from Colfax, on the banks of Potato Creek. Here the treatment of Bascom became so notoriously brutal that his emancipation was accomplished through the efforts of the indignant people of the neighborhood, led by Cap-

tain Milton B. Waugh. Captain Waugh was the head of the "Home Guards," and a braver, truer man never lived. It was here, at last, that the boy found the leashes unloosed, and, freed from the rule of Smith, found the door of hope open.



BETHEL SCHOOL ❖ POTATO CREEK ❖ BETHEL CHURCH

NOTE.—The building to the right of Bethel School was the home of "Old Man Smith" and his family when the refugee was rescued.

CHAPTER XII.

Captain Waugh had been a boy himself and understood them, while his good wife, country born and bred, with the freedom of action which such a life gives, was just the woman to influence the life of the youngster who thus had been placed by the Almighty in their hands. Notwithstanding the fact that the Captain was allied with that devoted band of men who were holding the line of loyalty at home and counteracting the influence of the Knights of the Golden Circle, or "Copperheads," who were lending aid to the South in every way possible, and notwithstanding the bitterness of the times, Captain Waugh took the little Southern boy into his home and never by word or look attempted to proselyte the lad from fidelity to his land and his people. It was impossible, however, that the refugee should not hear the discussion of the causes and conditions of the war and its progress, and the probable results.

He had heard the Yankees cursed and reviled as cruel monsters who would grind the heads of the Southerners into atoms if they could, and yet here he was being fed, clothed and cared for by one whose heart was wrapped up in the cause of the Union. He was not despised and kicked and cuffed about, but sat at the same board and was made one of the family. Mrs. Waugh mothered him and with considerate kindness made up to him in a large degree for the hardness of the past. His worn and frayed garments were thrown away and a new suit of "store clothes" were bought for him. And with the old clothes went the last of his old life. Instead of repression and oppression there came the opportunity to participate in the doings of the community and to give expression to those things which dominate a boy's mind.

It took him a little while to find that the shackles of

Smith's bondage were no longer upon him, but the realization asserted itself finally and he had two years of boyhood on the farm. To be sure, he worked hard, for that was the life of a farmer boy in those days. Called at four or five o'clock in the morning, while the stars were yet shining, he fed, curried and harnessed his team, threw the feed to the hogs and then was ready to answer the breakfast bell: not the electric buzzer attached to the dining-room table, but the big farm bell mounted on the milk-house. To this add the milking of two or three cows, the getting of the wood for the household, and the mending of machinery and harnesses, and you have the "chores" of every morning and evening. It meant a long day which seldom ended before dark. Yet, with it all came a feeling of independence, a knowledge of ability to do, which were to stand him in good stead in the years to come.

He became one of the boys of the neighborhood, and a favorite among the other lads, a leader in many ways, especially in mischief. He had an inborn sense of honor and integrity and his trustworthiness was demonstrated on more than one occasion. Probably nothing that the good Captain and his wife could have done would have so developed and broadened his life as the implicit trust they reposed in him. There was never the least suggestion that they did not absolutely believe in his integrity and truthfulness. From their treatment of him no one could have judged that he was not their own boy. Yet the older people of the neighborhood, knowing his coming into their midst as a waif, and unconsciously marking him as one who had no history or ancestry, sometimes shook their heads at the possibility of his ever amounting to anything.

Mrs. Waugh insisted that he have the privileges of the school during the winter months while he was with them, and the little schoolhouse over by Bethel church now called him, provided, however, with the books required. He made the most of his time there during the two winters he was at the Waugh farm. But at best he could only

obtain the most rudimentary familiarity with learning in so short a time.

An oyster supper at Captain Waugh's one winter's evening had as much to do with the future of Bascom as any other one thing, though at the time he did not realize it. These parties were great occasions. The young people came from far and near, and a night of merriment was sure to result. The old fashioned country games were played. It was Clarke's first experience at an entertainment of this kind, and he had not yet become sufficiently acquainted in the community to participate. So he sat watching the proceedings with wistful eyes, in them but not of them. Suddenly a new game was proposed, and the girls were given the choice of partners.

Bascom had no thought except to be counted out on this, but to his surprise a vivacious miss who had been the life of the evening, and whose rollicking laughter was infectious, called out:

"I want that little fellow over in the corner."

She made a dive, and before he could recover from his astonishment he found his arm linked by her and he was on his feet taking his place. Did he wake up? He most certainly did. For the rest of the time he devoted himself to her, and before the evening was over was ready to propose matrimony and start out in life with her. She came from a farm six miles away on the other side of Colfax, but the distance might have been as far as the moon and he would have made it. Yet he was destined not to go for a long, long time, notwithstanding he asked and received permission to come. If it was a case of love at first sight it was also a case where true love did not "run smooth." Just at the time agreed upon for the visit came the regulation villain. Clarke was told that after the little miss had gone home she had said she was only fooling with Bascom, that she would not have anything to do with him, and that if he came to see her he would not get in.

Clarke never thought to question the truth of this. He was sensitive to a fault. Feeling the humbleness of his

situation and the fact that he came as a waif, he was too ready to believe that this was an exact statement of the situation. The boy had been buffeted about so much and had been denied so many things that he was ready to believe that so rich a thing as the regard of this splendid girl, or even a thought of friendship, could not be his. So when the time came he did not go, and made up his mind to put her out of his thought and life. She had come with a young man belonging to one of the well-to-do families in the neighborhood and he knew that this young man was interested in her. And what was he? Nothing but a poverty-stricken farm hand with nothing ahead of him that any one could point out as promising sufficient to take care of a wife.

So, though he did not go to see her, the realization of his position in life stirred his ambition until he determined that no handicap should prevent him from making a success. He was a Clarke, and would come into his own if he did his best to measure up to the standard of industry and determination which ought ever to be the accompaniment of that name. He turned to his work, not content to drift, but looking for the chance to force an opening through a prospect of hopeless mediocrity into the promise of a successful life. And it is not to be denied that a fragment of hope remained that ultimately he might prove himself worthy and mayhap win his partner of the oyster supper.

In the meantime no one knew of the heartache or wound to his sensitive nature and he worked and played, and never went half-way in either. The country boy pranks are as old as country life and it would have been difficult to find a farmer's boy of those days who had not made the night hideous with a charivari of a newly married couple or demonstrated his prowess in abstracting watermelons from a well-guarded patch. A marriage was a challenge to a noisy demonstration which ended under the code as soon as a treat was provided. A melon patch was planted with the thought that it was in danger of invasion. Woe be to the newly-weds who refused to sub-

scribe to the custom of the times, and life was a burden to him who let the notice go forth that his melons were beyond the reach of the boys.

Both of these methods of entertainment were new to Bascom, but he was an apt scholar in mischief, and by his originality soon became a leader. To his credit be it said that there was no malicious destruction of property under his leadership. A melon patch, the product of which was free to the boys whenever they wanted it, was safe from intrusion. Every farmer had a patch and it was not necessary for any of the boys to raid one in order to get what they wanted to eat. The generosity of Captain Waugh with the melons he raised was so well known that no raid was ever made on his farm. Possibly the fact that one of the principal actors in the process of obtaining them unasked lived in his own house might have had something to do with his immunity. But it was well known to all the boys that they could have melons any time they wanted them with the full consent of the Captain. He always insisted that he planted them for their benefit.

It would scarcely be dignified, perhaps, but the biographers of some of the great military geniuses of the United States might truthfully state that their first display of military sagacity was as a boy in a melon patch. The campaign was planned as carefully as an attack upon the fortified rendezvous of the opposing army. And no two attacks were made in the same manner. Ingenuity of approach was essential to possible success. For instance, Uncle Bill Henderson "allowed" that if anybody came fooling around his melon patch there would be a liberal sprinkling of bird shot doled out as a welcome. He built a shack thatched with straw right in the midst of the patch. With his dog to stand guard and give warning of the approach of the enemy and an old muzzle-loading shotgun for weapon he slept every night in the shack.

A council of war was held when the loudly proclaimed challenge went forth, and it was unanimously agreed to

accept. Wednesday night, after prayer meeting, was set for the attack. The details of the affair were left to Bascom and he made a private reconnoissance to get firmly in his mind again the topography, location of the shack, best line of approach, and the safest avenue of departure.

An hour after midnight, thirteen boys rode silently in single file to a point in the road opposite the patch. Five of them were then detailed to watch the horses. The remainder made a "slip-gap" in the rail fence by taking out the lower rail and one by one crawled through, Bascom in the lead. HE KNEW THE DOG. Here was the key to the entire situation. He had never abused a dumb creature in his life, and as a result, every dog and horse in the neighborhood was his especial friend. So Clarke slowly and carefully made his way at the head of the line to where he could attract the attention of the dog and disclose his identity without awakening his master. When this was finally accomplished a little petting assured the dog that all was right and a few melons were taken and passed down the line of prostrate boys and through the fence to the watchers.

It was then decided that Uncle Bill would deny the visit if they departed without awakening him. So they laid a train of straw quite a ways back from the shack up to the building and set fire to it. Then they made for their horses and raised a yell Bill mistook in his dreams for the battle cry of the Mississippi Tigers, which he had so often heard while south with the 72d Indiana cavalry. He roused from his slumbers, heard the crackle of flames, jumped to his feet and realized that his precious guarded melons had been touched by profane hands. In an instant "bang-bang" went the shotgun, followed by a fusillade of bullets from the old revolver he had carried with him in the army. The boys, satisfied that he was awake, mounted their horses and were soon out of range.

Uncle Bill was at the Waugh residence early the next morning, demanding with much profanity and vigor of speech that that "Smith" boy should be threshed within an inch of his life.

"He was at the head of that gang, and I know it," yelled Uncle Bill, unhitching a few profane expletives from his vocabulary and hurling them out.

Captain Waugh only grinned and waited until the noise of the explosion subsided and then said quietly:

"I don't see how you can lay it to our boys, Bill, when we've got better melons in our patch than you ever grew."

So Uncle Bill departed uncomforted and unrelieved. As a reward to the Captain for his loyalty and in recognition of his generosity in this and other particulars the boys invited him to a feast of roast chicken in the sorghum house that night. After he had partaken and expressed his satisfaction over the feed, Bascom piped up:

"Mighty good chicken, ain't they, Captain?"

"They sure are," responded the Captain. "I ain't goin' to ask where yuh got 'em, but yer some powerful on selection."

"Yes, sir" continued Bascom, "we allowed we only wanted the best to feed you with and so we took them off your own roost to make sure."

The Captain paused with a dripping "drumstick" half way to his mouth, looked sideways at the speaker for an instant, and then said:

"Why, certainly, of course. I thought there was a familiar taste about 'em."

The news of the raid on Uncle Bill Henderson spread rapidly, and those who guarded their patches redoubled their vigilance. The perpetrators led the suspicion as far as they could in the direction of the Coyner boys and Bill Bowers over on the prairie, whose escapades and depredations were somewhat notorious.

Uncle Bill Powers had a fine patch of melons in the middle of his cornfield. He loudly defied anyone to get at them without suffering personal injury. He was tantalized with suggestions that the Coyners sure had an eye on the patch and would not let it pass. This caused him to adopt the extremest measures. Frank, the son, was placed on watch, armed with a squirrel rifle and a Colt's revolver which Powers was accused of having

bought when he joined the Knights of the Golden Circle. Frank was given orders by his father to shoot and shoot to kill, and every one of the boys knew that he would obey.

So the expedition against this patch assumed serious phases which ought to have caused the boys to hesitate if not to abandon the enterprise altogether. But it only called forth resort to another military strategy, namely, drawing the fire of the enemy and then rushing the works before a new supply of ammunition and reinforcements can be obtained. The night chosen was one when Long Jake Coyner and his gang were known to be in the neighborhood and likely to get the credit for the disturbance. "Old Shep," Uncle Bill's dog, was on watch with Frank, and under the tactics adopted this would make no difference. It was determined that when the defending force retreated for ammunition and reinforcements sufficient time would be given to leave the evidence of the visit, and this was all that was desired.

The orders were to lie flat on the ground in the corn until the shots were counted which indicated the expenditure of the last of the ammunition on hand in the garrison. There was but one shot in the squirrel rifle and five in the revolver. A careful survey of the situation by the commander-in-chief, the evening before, had determined that this was all. The squirrel rifle was a muzzle-loader, and the revolver contained powder and ball in each chamber, and was fired with percussion caps. So the process of reloading would be necessarily slow. Knowing these things the commander-in-chief reasoned that the garrison would go to the house for reinforcements rather than stop to reload his ancient apparatus.

An armful of "dornicks" each was selected from the bottom of Potato Creek, and the attacking party wormed silently through the cornfield to a point near enough for their purpose. At a whispered order a shower of rocks was sent in to shell the camp and arouse the defender. Then the attacking party immediately laid flat between the corn rows. "Sping" went the squirrel rifle, immediately followed by the bang-bang-bang-bang of the

revolver. "Old Shep" joined his voice to the general commotion. When the six shots had been counted, with a yell and a storm of rocks the attacking party advanced upon the citadel. As anticipated, Frank fled to the house to arouse his father, while "Shep" was close at his heels. The seeds of a juicy melon were scattered over the shanty, each grabbed a melon and made for the timber, thence by a circuitous route home.

At dinner the next day the raid on the Powers patch was under discussion. Young Clarke, with a well-assumed air of innocence, suggested that it might be well to guard their own patch against the possible incursion of the Coyner gang.

Captain Waugh looked out of the corner of his eye, and sagely remarked:

"And feed them roast chicken afterward!"

That was all, but it was sufficient to indicate that he had guessed the real leader, at least, in the subjugation of Bill Powers' melon patch.

CHAPTER XIII.

Bascom did not lack for religious teaching in his new home. If all the different beliefs, isms, sects and creeds had been a boiling flood and then hunted a suitable settling basin they could not have accomplished more than the community in the valley of Potato Creek showed. Old fashioned Methodists, Dunkards, Soul Sleepers, Spiritualists and a score or more of greater and lesser denominations found lodgment there. "Goin' to meetin'" and Sunday school was as much a part of life as eating. Anyone who failed to attend some form of worship was immediately classed as one on the direct road to purgatory.

Mayhap the adherents of each of the beliefs would criticise and belabor all the others as uncertain and outlandish ways to glory, but towards them they were tolerant, although pitying them for their lack of comprehension which led them by so crooked a path to the Kingdom of Heaven. But they all pounced with one accord, as unworthy confidence or recognition, upon that person who dared to assert disbelief in any of them. Bascom, being of an inquiring mind, though practically classed with the Methodists, was given to looking in upon the entire variety. To be sure, all except the Methodists were usually attended by him as a means of entertainment.

A revival in old Bethel Methodist church was an especial occasion for the assemblage of the community, and its success was measured by the number who were brought triumphant to the mourner's bench. For in those days they had a "mourner's bench," not a chancel. And if folks felt like shouting their praises at the top of their voices there was none to chide. It was noisy, demonstrative religion, but it was religion. There could be no denying the sincerity or earnestness of the worshippers, or their anxiety to bring others into the fold. Christianity! It bubbled up like a never-ending spring of pure water.

Great, strong characters were these people. Take Aunt Sally Kendall as an example. She lived her religion every day, winter and summer. It seemed to be the very breath of her existence. She was Clarke's Sunday school teacher, and she worked and longed for him to be caught in the great tidal wave of religious enthusiasm which accompanied a revival. At these times when she was not praying or singing or telling her story of Jesus and His love she was chasing Bascom and his chums down the aisles, seeking to take them as unbranded mavericks on the range of religious hope up to where the minister could give them his seal as probationers. Though the spirit of mischief may have prompted him to dodge the good woman in her endeavors, yet she left her impress upon the lad so that he, already well grounded in religious thought and belief, came as near being a Methodist as he possibly could without being an affiliate of the church. It was she who stimulated him to learn the verses of the Bible, until he won the prize for repeating more than anyone else in the Sunday school.

It was Aunt Sally who told the boys of their faults and sought by gentle, motherly sympathy to win them to correct living. Aunt Sally, it was, who successfully pleaded for them with 'Squire Mitchell when they took some of his fence rails and blocked the highway. And again it was she who gave them their first lesson in tolerance. The Soul Sleepers had a baptism in Potato Creek. Everybody went that Sunday afternoon to witness the process. The boys, standing on the bridge above, kicked dirt down into the water, but the sharp eyes of Aunt Sally caught them at it and at her rebuke they immediately desisted.

"Ye ain't got no call, boys, to mix dirt in another man's religion. They're entitled to the clean water God gives 'em to wash in, if they wants to. An' if they wants to go in swimmin' in the name o' the Lord let 'em swim. It's the sperrit ye do things with that counts with God."

Dear old Aunt Sally! She used to "walk with God," as she called it, when her hands were so crippled with

rheumatism that they were drawn out of shape, and surely it could be written of her:

"This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, . . . and we know that his [her] testimony is true."

Did not her influence and teachings fitly supplement those of the sainted grandmother whose body laid in the little cemetery at Mount Adams, back in Arkansas?

When Aunt Sally died she simply told her friends good-bye, and said:

"I see the beautiful gates open and earth seems fading away. All is well. I have fought the good fight and am going home to glory."

Old Charley Derrickson was a colored preacher who was wont to tell the Lord about the refugee boy and seek to implant in the mind of Bascom the eternal, living truths. Although an ordained Quaker preacher, he had few of the Quaker characteristics when it came to method of expression. He could be heard coming along the road, night or day, shouting and singing his praises to the Great King. He would expound the Scriptures and preach a sermon at any time and anywhere, on the slightest suggestion that by so doing he could awaken a sleeping flame of religious fervor and bring a soul repentant to its Maker.

In the days before the war Derrickson worked a section of the "underground railway" by which escaping slaves were helped to Canada. He lived to be over a hundred years old and was gathered to his fathers like a patriarch of old. He did not go, however, until Bascom, as a successful business man, had been able to tell him in person of the influence he had exerted on his life.

"Dutch Will," as a little German who lived right by the church used to be called, could only stammer in his broken way and say the same thing over and over again in prayer meeting and class meeting:

"My Christian friends, I can schtill say I'm trying to serve the Lord, und I vants you all to pray for me."

That was all, but somehow, with his life of simple godliness, no more was needed. Through such men as this



◆ CHARLIE DERRICKSON "NIGGER" PREACHER ◆



◆ TYPICAL SOUTHERN COLORED FAMILY ◆

humble toiler Bascom came to realize that it was the living of the truths of the Gospel that counted, not the eloquence of words.

Then came Jesse Parish, one of God's noblemen. He had served in the Army of the Cumberland for four years, and had carried his old-fashioned Methodist religion all the way through. His Bible was his constant companion. When it is known that he was the brother of Aunt Sally the wonder at this steadfastness may not be so great. Profanity, liquor and gaming were outside his role. He was deeply interested in Clarke and a sterling example of righteousness to the boy. A daughter, Doctor Rebecca Parish, is a Christian medical missionary in the Philippines. There she has erected a hospital for the poor and is training native girls to help "La Doctora" care for the unfortunates. Every grief assuaged, every misery relieved, every suffering mitigated through the instrumentality of this good woman is a testimony to her father and mother, from whom she drew the inspiration to do good.

There is always in every community one character who stands as the center of influence and to whose judgment nearly everybody yields. In the Bethel church neighborhood John Mitchell, the 'Squire, occupied this position. He was the dominant factor in the church as well as in the neighborhood. He had a big farm, well tilled, and for those times was wealthy. He was slow and deliberate in speech, and as a result never gave utterance to an opinion which had not been carefully weighed before expression. No class meeting was complete without him, and a church service which did not behold him in his pew was a rarity causing immediate comment and inquiry.

He was a giant in size and would as soon fight as pray if he thought he was right. He bore the burdens of more of the community than any other person and by his good sense often helped to solve its perplexing problems. The 'Squire was consulted on everything, from the laying out of a new highway to the proper name for the new baby; from the complexities of the tariff to the best means of

combatting the ravages of the grub-worm; from the things which would bring the greatest prosperity to the commonwealth to the best time to sell the calves. Widely read and of ripe experience, he was the oracle of Potato Creek.

When he was "converted" it was not in the stress and excitement of a "revival," but through deliberate reasoning, ending in his walking up to the chancel and offering himself as a candidate for probation. Immediately the reins of leadership in the religious society were handed over to him, and he took them as naturally as he assumed the chair at town meetings or political gatherings. He never knew fear. The banner he carried would never trail in the dust except it fell with him.

This spirit was demonstrated on the occasion of the McKendrie camp meeting. All Bethel church was there, together with the Methodists for miles around. In addition to those who came to pray and praise there were those who came to scoff and ridicule. Among the latter was "Devil Ike" Wyant, with a gang of roughs, intent on breaking up the meeting. The first skirmish took place one forenoon, when "Devil Ike" knocked down "Lige" Mitchell, the 'Squire's brother, who had remonstrated with Ike for swearing. In the altercation which followed Wyant found the numbers too great and left, vowing that he would return in the afternoon with reinforcements and break up the meeting.

It was a serious situation, for the campers were satisfied that the threat to return would be made good. They counseled together, and some were for abandoning the meeting and leaving rather than have trouble. But John Mitchell decreed otherwise.

"We are doin' the Lord's work, and with His sanction, and 'if God is with us, who shall be against us?' I ain't afraid o' no man livin' if the Lord's on my side. We'll fight."

He drove immediately to Midway (now Colfax), about two miles away, and procured a warrant for the arrest of Ike and other disturbers of the peace whose names

were unknown. On his return he handed the processe to "Billie" Blacker, the constable, a faithful Christian, and said:

"Now, Bill, you serve the writ and I'll make the arrest."

Sure enough, the afternoon brought "Devil Ike" and a crowd of the toughest element in the country round about. They were drunk and profane, threatening dire vengeance on the entire congregation. Blacker raised his hand in warning and said:

"We've the law on our side, Ike, and I have a warrant for your arrest."

Ike reached for his pistol, but before he could draw it the 'Squire, who had cut a stout hickory club and was close at hand, felled him to the ground like an ox. With Ike out of the way his attention and that of the others was directed to the remainder of the gang until every member was either under arrest or beaten into insensibility. All were taken to the village and fined heavily.

"Devil Ike" left town vowing that the life of John Mitchell should be the forfeit for his share in the affair. The desperado had lost one hand in a duel in Illinois before the war, and afterwards killed the man who had crippled him. It was claimed by his friends that Lincoln had defended and cleared him of the charge of the murder. His reputation was well known and Mitchell realized that if occasion were given Ike would probably make good his threat.

The desperado returned to Illinois, remaining there for several years. When he came back to Indiana Wyant renewed his threats, and many fears were expressed concerning the danger to the 'Squire. The latter gave no evidence, however, that he was worrying over the matter. On his way to Crawfordsville one morning Mitchell saw "Devil Ike" coming in his direction. The 'Squire was accosted with:

"Oh, you old devil! I've waited all these years for this chance. You owe me your life."

Before he realized it, Ike was looking down the muzzle of a revolver in the hands of the fighting Methodist and heard the quiet response:

"Yes, and I've just got the change."

He saw the determination in the gray eye and the steady hand holding the revolver. With a curse he turned and drove away. A short time afterwards he was found dead with a bullet in his brain. A nephew was arrested, charged with the homicide. The 'Squire heard of it and voluntarily went to Frankfort to testify for the defense. On the witness stand he told the jury that whoever killed "Devil Ike" rendered a service to his country. Largely through his story the young man was cleared.

There was one in the community who did not believe in Mitchell. That was Grandma Stook. Whenever Mitchell prayed she would jump up and run out of meeting. She said:

"He is a deceitful old devil and cheated me in a land trade."

The 'Squire was greatly disturbed, and he had tried repeatedly to talk to her and explain the matter. Conscious that he had not at any time done her wrong intentionally, he felt chagrined at this public denunciation. But she would neither talk nor listen to him. So he was forced to give up and bide his time. The old lady was coming down toward the gateway that leads to the other world. As she realized her time was short she finally sent for the 'Squire and there came the reconciliation and forgiveness on both sides.

"Pray for me, John, that God may forgive me as you have."

Kneeling at her bedside he prayed for her soul's repose, not the stilted, formal prayer with which he was wont to petition the Lord at church services, but the pulsation of a great heart rejoicing at being at peace with this poor woman who had misjudged him. As he finished and arose she weakly placed her hand in his and said:

"John, I believe God has heard your prayer."

Then she passed out in the beautiful beyond.

These lives, in their richness and ripeness, their hopes and fears, and these incidents so demonstrative of character, could not fail to help mold the life of the boy. And when the serious problems of life came to him later, those problems which called for the exercise of all his strength of mind and sturdiness of character, these influences, lodged within the doors of his memory, helped to make him strong and give him that faith which made mountains melt into molehills and rocky barriers to crumble into dust. More than once he was moved to thank God for having, through privation, want and suffering, moved him among these people, to let him know them and drink at the fountain of pure faith with them. It was a great discipline, hard and cruel at times, but such as would find the diamond of worth in a man if it existed.

CHAPTER XIV.

The cornfields assumed the appearance of Indian villages, with the shocked corn for wigwams. The early frost had started the gorgeous tints on the sycamores, beeches and maples. It was too soon for the fall rains. The dust was deep in the roadways and hung like a gray blanket on the grass and weeds beside, rising in a choking cloud with the passing of every vehicle.

Down the highway from the Hoffman farm walked a solitary figure. On his head a dirty straw hat which the summer rains had warped into the shape of an old-fashioned bee-hive. His worn jeans trousers were in the tops of his heavy cow-hide boots. A well-worn, though clean, hickory shirt completed the vesture, while a garment intended at one time for a coat hung over his arm. Short of stature and lean of figure, with a face that told a story of hardships and hands that bore unmistakable evidence of heavy tasks, Bascom Clarke was on his way to town to start upon a business career.

He had no well defined plan of how he was to accomplish it, with neither money nor business training. But he lacked the physical strength to wrest success in life on the farm under the agricultural methods of the time and the pay which a farm hand received. There lurked in his system the malarial germs brought with him from Arkansas, which, coupled with insufficient nourishment and neglect in his boyhood years, had left him physically impoverished. In addition to all this one of his legs was badly affected as a result of poison from a mosquito bite in the White River country, and was continually giving him trouble, making his work almost unbearable at times.

After his relief from the bondage of Old Man Smith he had been with Captain Waugh until he was older, and then at other places in the neighborhood where help was

needed. But the life palled on him, and, seeing no future but drudgery and poverty, he resolved to change it so far as he could. Bascom believed he could not be any worse off than he was, and that sometime and somewhere a door would be opened to his ambition.

He had sat on a plowbeam while the horses rested and watched the trains go by, building air castles with their steeples towering toward heaven and praying for the opportunity to build real ones. He had seen the hustle and bustle of active business life and ached to get into its scrimmage, and then felt the strain of the halter strap which kept him traveling in a circle in the day's grind. He fretted at the lack of opportunity and wished he had a hundred dollars. It would enable him to show the world what he could do.

But week after week and month after month he toiled at low wages, because farm help was held cheaply. He drove a team for one of the neighbors on the grading of the new railroad and had done all the varieties of work which would naturally come in a farming community, but there was no hope for growth or advancement, and absolutely no avenue for entering into business.

Besides, there was the girl of his dreams, who had singled him out for her especial favor at Captain Waugh's. It has been demonstrated over and over that nothing so spurs the ambition and stimulates industry as the holding out of the possibility that a certain woman may share in the things which may be wrested from the freakish Dame Fortune.

Since the night this girl had been his partner in the game played he had never met her. But she had come into his discouraged life like a flash of hope and its light had remained kindled in his heart all the time since. He doubtless did not own it to himself, but it is more than probable that the greater possibility of seeing her and the hunger in his heart for the sound of her voice and the sight of her face had something to do with his fixing upon Colfax as the place wherein he should begin his task of conquering a place in the world for himself. With

this new element in his life it had dawned upon him that, instead of drifting with the current of events, he must carve his own future, and the sooner he started the carving process the more chance he had of ultimately succeeding.

He realized as never before his lack of education and his physical unfitness. But if a woman, or the woman, was to have a place in his life, he must stop vegetating and commence to grow. In following the line of least resistance for so long he had almost forgotten that he was a Clarke. To most of the people he was still connected in mind with the Smiths. And so it was when he announced to the Hoffman family that he was going to town to live and work, they pitied his judgment and ridiculed the idea that with no prospect and no money he should refuse to let well enough alone and waste time in the village.

John Ghent was busy in his one-man drug store when he looked up and beheld Bascom standing there, evidently waiting to see him. Supposing he came as a customer, he turned to him when at leisure and asked him what he wanted.

"I want a job, sir," answered Bascom.

"A job! What do you know about drugs?"

"Nothing."

Now, it came to pass that as Bascom had waited in this particular store on this and other occasions his mind had been busy conjuring up the things that could be done by him there, so much so that he had practically hired himself to Ghent before that individual was aware of it. A one-man store is different from a one-man band. In the latter the proprietor gets some sort of harmony and rhythm out of the various instruments he plays with his hands, feet, elbows, knees, mouth and head. In a one-man store the more the man wriggles and twists and hurries to meet the demands of the trade the more of disorder and chaos results.

John Ghent's place of business was no exception. He

never had time to put things in order. The dirt covered the windows, shelves and goods. The bottles of drugs were dingy and unattractive and the floor covered with litter and cumbered with boxes. By the end of the long business day the proprietor was tired enough to go to bed instead of spending time to clean up. As a result the store was certainly a sight to behold. Mrs. Ghent took time once in awhile from her household duties to "tidy up" a bit, but she had enough to do at her end of the partnership without spending many hours in the store. So when the question came Clarke was prepared to answer it.

"Well, what can you do?"

"I can wash them bottles, sir, and the windows, and mop the floor!"

Ghent looked at him a minute, sizing him up and contemplating the matter, and then, as though struck with having help of that kind, said:

"All right, go ahead. You've got a job on probation."

And thus Bascom began his business career. Nothing was said about wages or pay. He began on the windows immediately, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing them shine, and for the first time in months at least the outside public were able to get a view of the interior. Then he began on the bottles. During the day Ghent called him to get things and told him where they were, so he was continually on the jump, busy and for the first time in many a day, happy. He was alert to anticipate what was wanted by the proprietor in addition to keeping broom, mop and wash rags busy.

He soon demonstrated, to his own satisfaction at least, that he was a useful if not absolutely essential part of the business. He went up to the house and Mrs. Ghent gave him his dinner and supper. The boy seemed to win his way to her heart immediately. He had no inkling as to whether he was to be kept beyond that day until an incident happened in the evening which established his place and value and solved the question for Ghent at once.

Four men had come into the store for oil and grease for their threshing outfit, near town. During the evening, previous to their coming to the drug store after necessary supplies for their machinery, they had spent several hours at "Old Jerry's" place across the street, taking on a supply of "forty-rod" whisky which had a fight in every drink. So by the time they reached Ghent's establishment they were in prime condition for a quarrel. While Ghent was getting the oil the leader of the gang, a big, burly, noisy fellow, suddenly began to apply some unrefined and approbrious epithets to Ghent and finally charged him with being a thief and cheating him at a horse trade, ending up with a declaration that he intended to "mop the floor" with him.

Clarke came in from the back room just in time to hear the altercation, and jerking an old Derringer pistol out of his pocket was at Ghent's side in an instant. Just as the big brute had his fist raised to strike and the others were gathering in to close on the druggist, they found themselves confronting the muzzle of the gun. They hesitated long enough for Ghent to recover from his surprise and reach into the drawer for his pepper-box, and with two pistols trained on the disturbers Ghent calmly told the men that a move on their part meant instant death.

They looked into the determined faces of the man and boy, and then the fight of the liquor departed and fear took its place. They began to beg, the leader the loudest among them. Then they began to abjurgate themselves and the whisky courage turned to whining remorse of conscience until, thoroughly sobered by the menace of death, they apologized for their language and conduct. Mutual explanations were then made by Ghent and the gang leader anent the horse trade and the latter departed with his retinue, loud in his protestations of everlasting friendship.

When they had gone, the druggist turned to the boy and extended his hand:

"Your probation is at end, son. You stay."

The events of the evening were duly told to Mrs. Ghent, after the store had closed, and she put her hand on the boy's head, looked into his face and quickly assented to the arrangement. Then she told him not to stay late in the store, but to come home and go to bed early, thus avoiding much of the roughness and coarseness the town contained. The line of railroad, now a part of the Pennsylvania system, but then known as the "Dolly Varden," was being built through the village, and the graders and construction gang included some pretty tough characters.

CHAPTER XV.

If a person wanted a broad education John Ghent's drug store was a good school,—that is, if only breadth were desired and quality not considered. It was the rendezvous of all the village characters, from the minister, who dropped in once in awhile to rub up against a savory joke, to the construction gangster, who decorated his language with the latest inventions in the way of profanity; from the old woman, who came to get some of her favorite "yarb" for medicine, to the village maiden, bashfully asking for her first supply of cosmetics.

The democracy of such an establishment is marked, and in this atmosphere Bascom Clarke swam like an old timer. At first he was a good listener. He attended to the duties of the place with unquestioned industry, feeling his way as it were to a recognized place in the community with which he had cast his fortune. Then came good-natured banter and raillery directed at him, which was caught and returned with interest until he became a general favorite of the habitués of the store. They conferred on him the nickname of "Doc," which clung to him all the remainder of his days in Colfax.

By watching John Ghent compound the concoctions which he was called upon to dispense, studying the contents of the bottles and packages displayed in the main store and filling the prescription case, Clarke soon learned to evolve the mysterious mixtures himself, at first under the eyes and direction of Ghent, and then independently. Abner Trotter was postmaster and a section of the store was set off for the business of the federal government. Bascom was sworn in as assistant to the postmaster and helped to take care of the village mail, and the postoffice employe in a village who does not thereby obtain inside information as to the lives of the

people is dull indeed. He was the possessor of the life secrets of the patrons, and to his credit be it said, they remained secrets so far as he was concerned. Nor did he once take advantage in any way of the information thus obtained.

His scrupulous honesty, genial manner and loyalty to his work made him an invaluable asset to his employer. Thus he grew into the affairs of the community. Of course he had his "try-outs," when the patrons of the store would test his mettle and see what he was made of, but he stood well under fire and by general consent was accepted as fit to be recognized as "one of them."

The village doctor sized him up one day, soon after Clarke told Ghent that the drug store needed just such a chap as he would prove himself to be.

"Well, young man," said Doctor Clark, "You don't seem to have had much difficulty in landing a job."

"I allow," responded Bascom, "that a boy who is willing to curry the horses before breakfast won't have any trouble finding a job."

"How do you like it?" continued the doctor.

"All right, sir. I'll like any job I git till I git a better one."

He was always hunting for things to do. One day when he went to dinner he noticed that Mrs. Ghent was nearly tired out. He stopped long enough to help her wash the dishes before he went back to the store. She demurred, but he said:

"You're tired, ma'am, and that's what my mother would want me to do, I know."

"God bless you, my boy," she said, and, softly pushing the waving lock back from his forehead, she kissed him.

He went back to the store glorified. It was as though his mother's hand had caressed him and her lips had touched him. He was cleaner in mind than he was before he went to the house. These little touches of human sympathy meant more to his sensitive nature than could be measured in an instant. He had felt so utterly alone that a kindly word or act, which made him feel that he

was worth while to some one else in the world, lifted him up and gave him strength to go on and ambition to hope for better things to come.

But a short time elapsed before he knew every man, woman and child in the village and the surrounding country. Quick in thought and action, with a fund of original humor which stood him in good stead; possessed of a certain intuition which enabled him to judge and measure character; having a temper that flashed up like gunpowder under provocation, and subsided just as quickly as soon the explosion was over; tender and solicitous for the weak and generous to a fault, Clarke came to his own, and before he was himself aware of it had a host of staunch friends.

Full of life and energy, the intimate relationship of neighbor to neighbor in a village, gave him abundant opportunity to know the oddities and characteristics of everybody. The spirit of mischief, always present, had plenty of chance for expansion, and his originality in devising unusual methods of entertaining himself and others is talked about even to this day.

This close rubbing up against people, and the taxing of his ability to meet the varied situations which were continually presenting themselves were of great service in developing and rounding out his life. The young people at first looked at him askance, then tolerated him and then accepted him into their ranks. The down began to make its appearance and was carefully cultivated and stimulated to do its utmost to make a respectable showing on his upper lip.

Even the minister's daughter, one of the prettiest girls in the town, thought he looked good, and, to tell the truth, he did. He had reached the age when a saucy look from a pair of bright eyes will create havoc with the most staid and sedate, to say nothing of a young man filled to the full and running over with youthful enthusiasm. So when the minister's daughter laughed a challenge to him to stroll with her he accepted with the pride of accomplishment which can only be likened to that assumed by

Alexander when he had conquered the whole world. He was turned to a dark brown from his work in the sun on the farm, and especially was this true of his hands and arms. After he had walked home with the young maiden in the dusk of the evening and while he sat contentedly enjoying his conquest, she looked at his hands in the twilight, and said innocently:

“Why don’t you take off your gloves, Mr. Clarke?”

The fall of the walls of Jericho could not have been more confusing to the inhabitants of that city than the demoralization of the confident assurance of Bascom at this sally. He stammered out an explanation of some sort, but the joy of the visit was over. For once the flow of conversation on his part was dammed, and try as he would he could not find a place to put his hands, and then his feet gave him trouble until in sheer desperation he betook himself home. That speech may have cost the young lady a proposal of marriage, for, though he took her to places afterwards and visited at the house, it still rankled enough to keep him from going beyond certain well defined lines of conduct with her.

Then, one Sunday, there came into the village for church the girl of the oyster supper. She was daintily dressed in a garment of soft red, with a parasol to match. He saw her and she saw him. It is possible he would have avoided the meeting if he had had time to prepare himself, but they met face to face. She stopped him and said:

“I thought you told me you were coming to see me.”

“I was coming, but I didn’t want to go to see anybody who didn’t want to see me.”

“Just what do you mean by this? Didn’t I tell you to come? You must have had your mind so full of other girls that you didn’t stop to think of me again. I don’t think it is playing fair to ask me to let you come and then have me sit and wait for you until I have to believe that you didn’t want to come.”

Then came the explanation. It took several hours, and neither seemed to begrudge the time. They strolled down

the railroad track to a spot on the bank of the creek, and there talked it out.

"They told me that you said that you only said I could come for fun and that if I did you'd show me the door right soon."

"I never did."

"And I thought you didn't think I was good enough to come to see you, and I guess I ain't, however much I'd like to."

"I never had such a thought. If I hadn't liked you that night at Captain Waugh's you can be certain I wouldn't have said for you to come."

"And I knew that a fellow was goin' to see you that had money and I didn't have a cent."

"Whether anybody has money or not doesn't make any difference in my friendship."

"And I haven't got any home or any folks, and I thought you felt I was only a bit of driftwood."

"I don't have to have a family tree handed to me by anyone who puts any value on my friendship."

"I've thought of you and dreamed of you all the time since that night."

"Can you tell me how I was going to know that if you didn't give me the information yourself. I'm neither a mind reader nor an interpreter of untold dreams. If you didn't come to see me I simply had to believe that you didn't want to, in the absence of any other explanation."

"I know it, and it's my fault. But you don't know how it feels, Belle, to have everything that's given to you passed over like you would give pennies to a beggar, and have people look at you and treat you as though you was a pauper. I knew that when Captain Waugh and his wife took me away from the Smiths they did it out of pity. Maybe I looked at it wrong, and probably they didn't look on it as charity. But I felt like one of the town poor. And I didn't dare to let myself think that you would pay any attention to a refugee boy. I did like you, and I did want to come and see you and I do like you now and want to come and see you. I want to be somebody. I don't

want to be nothing but a cipher in the world, and I am going to work hard. But I want you to share whatever I have. I believe if I could know that there was hope that you would marry me I could work better and harder and be more content with what comes."

"Marry you! It's too soon to talk of that."

"Nothing is too soon if it's right. My mind's been made up a long time. I don't have to have time to mooch over the thing. All I want is your consent."

"But, Bascom, think! This is only the second time you've talked to me."

"I don't care if it was only the first time. I know what I want and I've seen enough of life to know that there ain't no home without a woman. If you think I don't know all about you because I haven't been to see you, you are muchly mistaken. I'm just as certain now as I will be ten years from now. You can't live in a town like this and not know the people. Don't you suppose your goin's and comin's have been watched by me all the time? I know what you've been doing and where you've been, and who with. And I haven't been hidin' my light under a bushel. I may not have been always right, but I've never been a sneak. What I've done I have done in the open, and everybody can judge whether I am square or not. If you think I'm not right—"

"Oh, no, I didn't think anything of the kind."

"And you don't care if I am poor?"

"I'm not afraid of poverty."

"Then, why don't you tell me you'll marry me," and have done with it?"

"Because it's too serious a matter to decide offhand like this."

"Not if it's the right thing to do. You've thought of me some, haven't you?"

"Why, yes, of course."

"And you've thought that some time I might ask you to marry me, haven't you?"

"Why, what a question!"

"Well, you have, haven't you?"

"What reason have you for thinking that?"

"I'm not hunting for reasons! I'm chasin' facts. You have, haven't you?"

"Well, it seems to me a girl would be mighty foolish to be thinking a fellow would ask her to marry him when he wouldn't even come to see her."

"You're dodgin' the question, Miss Watkins. I've asked it several times."

"You had no right to ask it, and I don't have to answer."

"That's enough. You have thought it or you'd 'a' popped out a big 'No!' long before this. Now, if I've thought of it all this time, and you've thought of it all this time—"

"I told you I hadn't said I thought it."

"I know. Now, assuming these things—"

"But you haven't any right to assume."

"As I said before, assuming these things, why should it be necessary for me to wait five or six months or a year before I take with me back to my work the feeling that if I do win out in the world you'll be part of the scheme. I ain't had much of what I wanted in this world, girly, and I don't believe you have the heart to deny me this one hope which means more to me than I can tell you. Tell me this, Belle, please, because it will do more for me now than anything else: If I go on working and trying to climb up the mountain side of life, though the road is hard and rough and tiresome, can I look forward to the time when you'll put your hand in mine and go with me?"

There was no answer. The girl was studying the ground.

"I haven't any mother, Belle, dear, and no one to care whether I live or die. I haven't any folks and a fellow without folks is a pretty lonesome cuss. I want you. I haven't any highfalutin' language to throw at you and I wouldn't use it if I had it because you've got too much sense to listen to it. I'm so poor that the shadow of a ten dollar bill would make me feel rich. But I ain't afraid of the future if I've got somebody to work for. God won't deny me fair wages if I'm square and I'm just as

sure that He sent you to me as that I am sitting here. Why else should He have put me through all this hardship and sufferin' and brought me here, then send you to Captain Waugh's and prompt you to pick me out of all the rest, and then pilot you to meet me this afternoon? I ain't never doubted Him since the days of my dear old grandmother, and I ain't doubtin' Him now. So far's I'm concerned it's all settled now, and I'm only waitin' for you to agree. There ain't no use talkin'—I gotta have you, Belle. I just wish you could feel a little bit that you might like to come. I'd feel better. Say! Tell me: You're goin' to say yes, ain't you?"

"Say 'Yes' to what?"

"To all I've been asking you. You will marry me, won't you?"

"Why—"

"No 'whys,' but you will, won't you? Say 'Yes'! darn it, say 'Yes'!"

"Well, 'Yes,' then."

With a whoop, Bascom jumped to his feet and, in his excitement, grabbed her open parasol and, waving it around his head, threw it into the creek. Then he hauled out a revolver and shot it full of holes before it sank out of sight.

This almost caused a rescission of the consent on the part of the future Mrs. Clarke, but the ebullition of spirits was so genuine and his joy so apparent that, coupled as it was with immediate repentant dismay, she forgave him. She made him sit down again, and they talked long and earnestly concerning the things to be accomplished before it would be possible for them to be married. Their newly established relationship was to be a secret between themselves until such time as it should be wise to disclose it.

After he had taken her to her aunt's house in the village Bascom went back to town with his head high in the air, and it never came down again. He had won his first great victory in the battle of life and one which he knew then meant the obtaining of the promise of the absolute sinews of war in the conflict, a good wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

Father and Mother Watkins were not very favorably impressed with the idea of a union of the houses of Clarke and Watkins. At least that is what might be gathered from the reception given by them of the news that Belle had been seen in company with the young drug clerk. Their prejudice and protest were shared in by the other members of the family, resulting in decided discomfort for the lady most concerned.

"What you doin' 'round with 'Doc Smith,' Belle?" asked Pa Watkins.

"His name ain't Smith, Pa. It's Clarke. I've told you that before."

"I don't care what his name is, but he's a piece of trash that Old Man Smith brought up here from nobody knows where, and you don't know anything about him, or who he is, yet you go trapsin' 'round with him, I understand."

"Yes, I've been with him twice, and I presume I'll go with him some more."

"Why, Belle!" said the mother.

"Now, don't side with Pa in his abuse, Mother. He don't know Mr. Clarke."

"No, an' I don't want to know him, nuther," sullenly defended Watkins, pater.

"That ain't fair, Dad, and you know it. I know enough about him to know that I'm happy with him and I ain't happy with anybody else, and I'll bank on his bein' right."

"But, Belle," mildly interposed the mother, "He's a nobody and there's—"

"Oh, yes, I know what you're going to say and who you mean. You've been throwing him at me or rather me at him for years, just because he has money. I suppose you'd like to say, 'Yes, that's our daughter, the wife

of so-and-so. He's very wealthy and comes of one of the oldest families in Indiana."

"Belle, don't forgit yourself!" sharply interposed Mrs. Watkins.

"I ain't forgetting. Haven't I had him served up to me for breakfast, dinner and supper? And haven't you made icebergs out of yourselves every time any other young man has come into the house with me. The trouble is you've got your hearts set on me marrying your pick-out, and as I'm the most interested party I prefer to pick out my own husband."

"You're showin' mighty poor jedgment," added the father.

"I presume the same words are familiar to Ma as having been said when she picked you out, but I'll bet she stood pat."

"Now, Belle, that ain't no way to talk to your father," broke in the mother, though if one looked sharply he could have seen a flood of recollection lighten her countenance.

"Well, it's the truth, for I've heard you say yourself that your folks tried to keep you from marrying Pa, 'cause they thought he wasn't good enough for you. And yet he and you and all of you are poking in my affairs just as though you hadn't been there yourself."

"But, Belle, we're doin' it for your own good," defended the mother.

"Oh, don't argify with her, Mother," put in Pa Watkins. "She's like all the rest of the girls nowadays. They take the bit in their teeth and ain't got no respect for their elders and don't want none of their advice."

"Now, that ain't fair to me, Pa. Ever since I've been old enough I've worked and scrubbed and been in the fields and helped every way I could, and you've told me yourself I was as good as a man about the place. But that was when I was a piece of machinery savin' you money. Nobody has ever had any reason to say anything against me, and I have played the dutiful daughter role to the limit. I've never refused to do anything you asked me. The trouble is you haven't found out that I've grown

up. I'm old enough to judge things from a woman's standpoint, as my mother judged them for herself, and so far as this particular matter is concerned I only ask that you let me be judge, as I will be the only one to suffer if I make a mistake."

"Well, keep him away from here. I don't want nothing to do with him. You make your own bed and you lie in it. I wash my hands of it." Thus Pa Watkins ended the discussion that time. But it was renewed over and over.

Meanwhile Bascom was paying court like an old-timer at the game. He borrowed Dave Ball's horse and buggy and Sunday afternoons they had long drives, talking those things which are not essential to be made public, but which can be imagined by those of experience and dreamed by those yet to pass through the gate of love. Always, however, the drives began and ended at the house of the aunt in the village. And even here Clarke seldom got beyond the threshold.

"I don't want to have any trouble with your folks, Belle," said the aunt, "So while I sympathize with you, I don't think it best to let you do your courtin' in my house. It don't look right."

Bascom insisted on going to her home to see her, but she kept him away on one pretext or another, until one evening he refused to leave her at the gate and followed her into the house.

"I may as well brave this storm first as last, Belle," he said. "I gather from your actions that the folks ain't takin' very kindly to the condition of affairs. But if I'm goin' to marry the daughter I at least ought to have an introduction to the father and mother."

So he went into the house. The father acknowledged the introduction with a grunt, and the mother with a nod. Then a funereal silence ensued. Clarke, usually full of conversational topics and bent on making a good impression, made various and widely divergent essays to open an exchange of civilities. But for once his diplomatic and breezy overtures were fruitless. Not an observation of

any kind could he obtain. An area of low pressure was present, and his conversational barometer began to drop until he finally gave up and scudded under close reefed sail for his home harbor. Telling about it afterwards to his best girl, he said:

"It reminded me, Belle, of the story of the tramp printer, who got drunk and invaded the printing office, demanding work. The foreman kicked him down the first flight of stairs, the pressman helped him vigorously to the next landing, the editor fired him to the ground floor, where the office boy threw him into the street. As he scraped the mud off himself and rubbed the sore spots he turned around and said: 'I know what the matter is with those fellers. They don't want me in there.' I'm firmly convinced, after patient investigation, that the folks don't want me in there."

"I didn't want you to go, Bascom, and I've tried all the time to keep you away. I knew just how it would be."

"Oh, don't you mind, little girl. I don't. I've done my duty, and you've done yours. I would rather have had their blessing and a 'God-bless-you!' but if they don't feel it we'll have to make the best of it. If we fall down, Belle, in making our way in the world they can sit back and say they didn't have any hand in the affair nor lend any encouragement to it."

"I'm awfully sorry," she said, as the tears of mortification and humiliation came in spite of her fortitude and determination not to cry.

"Never mind, girlie. Don't cry. Let's be brave. It's not the first rebuff I've met, nor probably will it be the last. I have told you, haven't I, about my old grandmother, down south? When I was a little chap she told me: 'Honey, nevah doubt Him. There will come days when you think He has deserted you; when you'll wonder why you can't find Him. Pray to Him, Bascom—pray with all youah min' and strength, and the light will come. I want you to be a good man, Bascom.' I couldn't have come this far on the road, with all the troubles I've had, if it handn't been for this simple faith that God will

order all things for good finally. I ain't afraid, Belle, are you?"

"No, I'm not afraid. Oh, how I wish I could have known your folks. God-fearing and God-loving people like that are genuine. There ain't any room for sham."

"I wish you could have known 'em, too, Belle. I know we would have had their blessing. Maybe, maybe they're looking down from up there and helping us." His voice broke and he murmured, "Mother, oh, Mother, how I've longed for you!"

Quick came the touch of the woman God had given to him, with her love and sympathy:

"Don't, honey! She's happy, and I'll do everything I can to make up to you for her loss. And I feel her blessing now, just as you do. We won't mind what folks say or do. We'll have each other and the world can stay on the outside if it wants to."

"God bless the day, girlie, when you came into my life. Yes, we'll fight the battle together, and never fail in our trust."

Thus time went along, and the mutual confidence and understanding between the two grew and ripened. The opposition in the Watkins home was unabated. With ridicule and inuendo they sought to break the girl's will, but patiently, uncomplainingly she bore it all. The firm conviction that she was taking the right path gave her strength to go through to the end.

In the meantime Bascom was earnestly striving to find some opening whereby he could increase his income. Five dollars a week looked mighty small. Just at this time, however, life at home was being made almost unbearable for Belle, and her depression resulted in action on the part of Bascom, somewhat impulsive, it must be confessed, but such action as he deemed justifiable under the circumstances.

After much persuasion he induced Miss Watkins to consent to an immediate marriage.

"But how will we live, Bascom?" she asked.

"It'll have to be one of those cases where the 'Lord will provide.' I'm going to throw judgment to the four winds, for once, and take a long shot based entirely on my faith in God. You ain't happy the way things are, and I've promised, you know, to try and bring you happiness. Will you do it?"

With a feeling that she had reached the full limit of her endurance, and that her happiness could only be attained by such a step, she yielded. There could be no hope of a reconciliation such as would permit of her marriage at home, so their plans were made accordingly.

Dave Ball had just bought a new buggy. He had promised himself and everybody within hearing that this buggy was not to be hired or loaned to anyone, on any occasion.

"I paid a hundred and a quarter for that buggy," he said, "and I've bought it for my private use. I've loaned and hired out every other rig I ever possessed to every Tom, Dick and Harry, and they've made every one of them look like a wreck. This one don't go to anyone, so you needn't ask for it."

"Doc" approached him one day and took him off to one side:

"Dave, I want to borrow your buggy!"

"What the—! Say, young man, didn't you hear my statement that I wouldn't let anybody have it?"

"Yes, I did, Dave. But you'd let it go on a sort of life or death matter, wouldn't you?"

"Life or death matter. You ain't got no life or death matter on hand."

"Yes, I have, Dave. I'm going to get married, and in the strained condition of my finances I don't know of anything that could be nearer to a life and death proposition than that, do you?"

Dave opened his mouth in wonderment.

"Going to get married! Who to?"

"Belle Watkins."

"Belle Watkins! Why, her old man would skin ye alive."

"Well, I've got to take that chance, Dave. Will you let me have the buggy?"

"I admire your nerve, not only in this buggy business, but in landin' that girl as a life partner right from under the old man's nose. I thought he had different arrangements for her."

"He did have, perhaps, but the girl's for me. Can I have that buggy?"

"I allus did think that girl had a min' of her own, and I ain't sayin' that she is lackin' in judgment. Though she's takin' a mighty long chance, ain't she, Doc?"

"Success in life's made up of long chances, usually, Dave. Can I have that buggy?"

"So you're goin' to marry Belle Watkins. Great Scott! Is she grown up? I can hardly believe it. Where you goin' to live?"

"I haven't got that far yet, Dave. My mind has been taken up with more weighty problems. Can I have that buggy?"

"All my life I've been doin' things I said I wouldn't, just to be accommodatin'. Now, I'm going to stick to this one promise I've made myself that this buggy is not to be loaned."

"Oh, Dave, I've just gotta have it. It means everything to me."

"I said, didn't I, that this buggy is not to be loaned or hired to anyone; that it was for my own private use!" thundered Dave. "Well, I mean what I say!" Then he added, after the illy concealed disappointment had settled on Clarke's face, "But of course the barn door is unlocked, and I can't help it if some one goes in and gets the buggy without my consent and uses it especially for the purpose of getting married. I presume I wouldn't feel called upon to prosecute them if the buggy was back there in the barn after it had served its purpose."

Clarke was off like a meteor, the buggy disappeared for the day, the knot was tied so that it hasn't even slipped since, and the parties most intimately concerned returned to let the news trickle to the waiting curiosity

of the town. Consternation reigned at the Watkins homestead. The father declared that the "young whippersnapper" should never cross his threshold. This news was conveyed to Belle by members of the family, who were nonplussed by her reply:

"Well, that bars me from home, then, for I won't go until my husband can go with me."

Thus things ran along for some little time. The mother pined for her daughter, and the daughter wanted to see her mother and talk to her of her happiness. But the father stubbornly refused to yield and the daughter stuck to her imposed condition. The mother love finally conquered.

Watkins stopped his team in front of Ghent's one day. His hitherto unrecognized son-in-law came out and with a cheery nod unchecked the animals so that they might reach the tank for a drink. It was a thing he had done many times before. His love for animals made him go out in front any time he happened to be idle, and pet the horses of the farmers as they drove up to the town pump, and assist them to get at the water, pumping the tank full for them if the water happened to be low.

Watkins seemed to be struggling with his lingual apparatus, but finally, in the first tone of civility with which he had spoken to Bascom, said:

"Belle's mother wants her to come up to the house and see us."

"Well, I've told her to go. I think she ought to go and see her mother. We don't have but one mother."

"Belle says she won't come unless you do!"

"She needn't feel that way. You're her folks and it's very plain I'm not. Tell her to go as far as I'm concerned. It'll do both her and her mother good."

"But she won't come 'thout you, and so you-all mought as well come, too."

"Am I to consider that as an invitation to come up, Mr. Watkins?"

"Well, I presume that's what it amounts to. I can't stand her mother cryin' all the time, and it's all laid on

me. What's did can't be undid, and we mought's well make the best on it. So, you-all better come up."

"Tell Belle's mother we'll be up to-night."

The mother and daughter had their arms around each other and were crying in concert, the old man blew his nose with the sound of a Mississippi River steamer whistling for a landing. The sisters choked up and sobbed. The cause of all this disturbance stood awkwardly by, waiting for a calm in the storm whereby he might discover a stray bit of sunshine. The old man, having seen these kinds of gales before, silently motioned to Bascom to go with him, and they went out to the barn where the conversation turned upon the condition of the crops and other safe topics by which men get acquainted.

CHAPTER XVII.

A civil engineer, laying out the line of a projected railroad, can cause more grief innocently than the worker in any other occupation except that of a minister of the gospel. The minister says the few words, "I pronounce you man and wife," and sets in motion forces over which neither he nor the gods have control afterwards. The surveyor wiggles his transit a little this way or that and reckons not of the consequences, but raises and destroys towns in the operation, separates a man from his front door-yard, takes away his home, drives the cattle out of their favorite pasture and causes a general readjustment to extremely changed conditions.

So it came about that by a slight twist to his surveying instrument the chap laying the level for the new Vandalia line swung several hundred feet to the north of the village of Colfax to avoid having to fill a tract of low land and at the same time get a satisfactory location for the crossing of the Big Four tracks. He went on his way toward the east, but he left a trail of trouble in the town that broke friendships, cancelled engagements to marry, divided families, blasted hopes, and nearly caused bloodshed. At the time no protest was made; in fact, it was deemed an advantage rather than a detriment to have the new noise and confusion removed that far from the immediate vicinity of the town.

Old Doctor Clark owned the land adjacent to the new right-of-way, including the swamp with its "pussy willows," bogs and cat-tails. He had a vision one day, went over to Thorntown and brought back the county surveyor, who, after looking over the ground carefully, laid out the plat of an addition to Colfax. Then the wise ones held the doctor up to ridicule, and jibed him about laying out town lots for the frogs and getting ready to build

houses for the mosquitos. But he kept his peace and went on with the work. The frogs seemed to be the only ones who took him seriously, and they discussed the matter long and loud every night, while the village people laughed at the noise made by the inhabitants of "Doc Clark's City."

Things conspired, however, to help the enterprise. The first really important move was made by the two railroads. In a spirit of economy the Big Four and the Vandalia line built a joint station at the crossing of the lines, that one agent might attend to the affairs of both companies. This required the inhabitants to walk a little farther in the pursuit of their daily avocation of going to the "depot" to see the trains come in, but it was not looked on as a special menace to tranquility.

Then along came E. H. Johnson, a fellow who had made his money in California during the gold excitement of "forty-nine," and who, since that time, had been a successful merchant. He had recently sold out his business in one of the other towns in Indiana and was looking for a new location. Following the new railroad he had dropped into Colfax.

The "Commercial Club" did not welcome him, and he received no encouragement to remain. There were merchants enough. In fact the people then in the town would be sufficient to transact all the business which might be attracted by the new means of communication. Being on the ground they looked on all outside capital seeking investment as poaching on their preserves, unless said outside capital would be content to leave itself in the hands of the original inhabitants and go on about its business. There were no store buildings to be rented, and the patronage of the town would not warrant the construction of any more.

Dr. Clark, however, took in the situation at a glance. He invited Johnson to take a ride with him. This was a signal for much hilarity on the part of the old-timers. There was an immediate call of the roll in Ghent's drug-store for the purpose of commenting on the probability

of Clark's "soaking" the stranger with some of his bog property.

"Well," said Marion Fitch, "if he buys in that there swamp he'll buy with his eyes open, for 'Doc's' taken him there in broad daylight."

"He had to take him in the daylight to pick out the dry places to stand on when they viewed the landscape," said another.

"I hear the feller wants to run a store," chimed in John Girt.

"If he does he'd better have a supply o' stilts for his customers to cross the ditch on," volunteered Bartholomew, the undertaker.

"Oh, no!" answered the hardware dealer, "By the time he gets any customers over there they'll have flyin' machines invented."

"He won't have any trouble gettin' all the greenbacks he wants from his nearest neighbors," said the village joker, following his sally with a fair imitation of a croaking frog.

This being the place always set forth in the program for laughter, everybody indulged.

"Don't you suppose 'Doc' Clark knows what he's about?" inquired Bascom.

"Course he knows what he's about, and I hopes he gets some dough out of the stranger. He ain't afraid to loosen up when he's got it," said John Ghent.

"I don't know that it's hardly right for him to palm those worthless lots off on a stranger," remarked the minister.

"Oh, that feller's got his eye teeth cut, all right," answered the undertaker. "He ain't no spring chicken. If you pi'nt out the ring-bones and spavins to the cuss and he hears the horse heave, and then wants to buy, let him have it. Same here. 'Doc's' taken him over with the sun shinin', an' if the feller thinks he can make a metropolis out o' a frog pond let him go to it, I say."

"They built Chicago in a swamp, didn't they?" said Bascom.

"Well, Sheecawgo is Sheecawgo and Colfax is Colfax, that's all there is to that," said the hardware man. "They's plenty o' good land west and south and east, without goin' across that ditch to build. 'Tain't none o' my funeral, howsumdever, and I say, let him buy if he wants to."

Somebody called the undertaker to come across the street to his store, and with the possibility of selling a high chair for the new baby he departed and the conference was at an end.

When Doctor Clark returned from his drive with the stranger he was non-committal over the result of his negotiations, but it was apparent from his countenance that he was not at all discouraged.

"How'd you make out, Doc?" asked John Ghent, when the store was empty.

"Oh, he's thinking the matter over," said the Doctor. "I'll probably hear from him later. Better buy some lots over there, John."

"Not me," responded Ghent with a laugh. "This place is good enough for me."

"Maybe so, but you might not be making a bad investment at that."

"Oh, come off, Doc, you don't think for a minute that anybody with any sense is going to go 'cross that ditch to make a town!"

"Stranger things have happened, John, and I wouldn't be surprised if there was quite a collection of people on the other side after awhile, together with some good business houses."

"Haw! Haw! Business houses! Why, you're dreamin', Doc. If you keep on you'll be one o' these reg'lar real estate men what kin see a hundred thousand population in a two thousand town without closin' his eyes."

As Ghent turned away to attend to a customer, the old doctor put the question to Bascom:

"How about you, Clarke? Are you going to invest?"

"My ship hasn't come in yet, Doctor, and I can't buy, but I'll bank on your judgment."

"Never mind, son, keep your eyes open and don't tell everybody your business and your ship will come into port. Just remember that the fruit along the beaten path is usually picked pretty clean. If a fellow calls you a fool for doing something you've worked out yourself instead of imitating someone else, just keep plugging along and wait. The fellow that called you a fool will swell all out of shape because he knew you when you were poor, and go shouting to the world what a genius you are, and that he always knew you were destined to succeed."

Johnson was in town quite often after that, and finally the "knockers' club" was amazed to find an unusual stir on the other side of the ditch. Brick walls and chimneys began to make their appearance until quite a pretentious aggregation of structures resulted. Then all Colfax sat up and took notice of the passing events. Merchants and other business men in the new town opened their places to the trade and began making bids for patronage. Prices were cut to attract custom, and the housewives, always hunting for a bargain, soon had a path worn across the low ground. The old stores retaliated and a merry war resulted.

The new addition was derisively called "Bucktown," while the old village heard itself jeeringly referred to as "Cobtown." If calico went down a cent in "Bucktown" it was reduced two cents in "Cobtown." If the price of ten pounds of sugar was shaved five cents in "Cobtown" it was lowered seven cents across the ditch. The old-fashioned brimstone matches, commonly called "seven-dayers," usually retailed at ten cents a box. The internal revenue on them at that time was three cents a box, and they cost at wholesale seven cents. "Bucktown" made a coup on matches, retailing them at five cents a box. John Ghent was quick to take advantage of this and sent young Clarke to "Bucktown" to buy the supply for his store.

The people in the old town were not as loyal to the old merchants as was hoped for. They said to each other:

“If these men can sell these goods now at these prices, why didn’t they do it before?”

And so the trade gradually began to show a tendency to balance toward the new town. In desperation the “Cobtownites” began to build brick blocks, and thus by up-to-date stores seek to hold the ever-ebbing tide of patronage, but in vain. They had awakened too late. John Ghent saw the tendency of affairs, and with his usual quick judgment sold his store to “Ethan Allen,” as he was known. Abner Trotter, the postmaster, also left for a new location, after obtaining from Bascom a promise that he would stay and look after the postoffice until Trotter’s successor was appointed, at the same time telling Clarke that he had sent in his resignation and recommended his assistant for the place.

This seemed all right, and Clarke took full charge of the office. After taking possession of the store Allen gathered a few of his old cronies in the establishment and proceeded with them to celebrate his purchase with an all-night orgie. While Allen’s head was still sore from the effects of the celebration Bascom took him to task for defiling the government postoffice in this manner, and virtually turning the place into a saloon. Allen opened up a battery of language that sounded too much like Old Man Smith at his best, down in Arkansas.

The dignity of the government having been thus insulted, and its representative refused the recognition rightfully his due, Bascom picked up the postoffice one day and moved it to another building which at this time happened to be empty. This left Allen without a prescription clerk, but in the state of business this was no special hardship. A new modern drug store had been built and equipped in the new town, and thither most of the prescription business would go now anyway.

The war between the two localities continued unabated, but the old town was losing. Resting content that the appointment was coming to him, and that he would be thus enabled to live on the returns of the office, Bascom

was destined to find his faith in mankind again shaken. There came to him one day U. R. Hawley, who had been of the number that some time before had taught young Clarke the lesson of brotherly love through the symbolism of the building of King Solomon's Temple.

"Doc," said Hawley, "You are expecting to be appointed postmaster, are you?"

"Why, of course. Trotter read me the letter recommending me for the place."

"Well, I have certain knowledge that he didn't recommend you, whatever kind of a letter he read or showed to you. In reality he named your undertaker friend and this has caused a row among the whole caboodle of them. Our mutual friend, the milliner, would like to have it, and really of the bunch I think she is the most deserving. But the folks won't stand for a woman handling their letters and would think she was at least surmising on the contents, however innocent she might be. The hardware man has his petition secretly being circulated. Jim Arrick, as usual, is helping all of them and drawing money for preparing papers. Now, these fellows have double-crossed you. What are you going to do?"

Stunned for an instant by the information that these men had thus betrayed him. Bascom only said:

"I suppose that means give it up, then, for I haven't any political influence or powerful friends at Washington to help me. I'd fight 'em if I knew what to do."

Just then he spied Captain Milton Waugh coming along the street and called him in. The captain was given the status of affairs, and the old fighting strain in his blood began to tell.

"Send for Bob Dunbar right away," he said.

"Bob" Dunbar was busy on his farm, on which the refugee boy had worked when Old Man Smith had drawn the pay. He came in immediately, not even waiting to change to his "town clothes." The matter was gone over and the need of immediate action was apparent.

Hawley was postoffice inspector. On his previous visits

he had come into contact with young Clarke, who practically did all the business of the office, and between the two there had sprung up a friendship that stood the young man in good stead at this time. He introduced the inspector to Captain Waugh and the captain asked the former to take a walk with him. They went away and were gone for several hours, going over the entire matter carefully. When they came back the Captain said:

"Son, I think you've come to the partin' of the ways. The ones that ought to've stood by ye over here have been too busy layin' pipe for their own selfish ends to pay much attention to you. The fact is, most of your real friends is on the other side of the ditch. Now, our friend Hawley here, has solved the problem of this postoffice business so that you can get the appointment. I'll let him explain it for himself."

"You see, Clarke," said the inspector, or special agent as he was called in those days, "this office pays about \$15 a month. The government pays \$300 a year, or \$25 a month to have the mail carried from the railroad station to the office. If the office is located within eighty rods of the station the railroad company has to deliver the mail without compensation, as a part of its general contract with the government. Now, if you will agree to locate the postoffice in which ever end of town the government designates, we will land the office for you. I am going to recommend to the department that the location of the postoffice be changed to a point within eighty rods of the station, and the department will, in my judgment, act upon my recommendation and order its removal. As I understand it, you have no other business now except that of the care of this office and it can make no difference to you where the office is located. Captain Waugh here, whom I have come to esteem very highly, and who has demonstrated himself a true friend to you, will go on your bond, together with your friend Dunbar. What do you say to it?"

"If Captain Waugh and Mr. Dunbar go on my bond, it seems to me I should consult their wishes to some ex-

tent on the question of location. Captain Waugh was a friend to me when I had no friends, and if it is his wish that I take the office and move it there I will do it."

"Thank you, son," said the Captain, acknowledging the tribute to him. "I am satisfied that the move is the right one. Hayden and Teegarden have a fine drug store over there, and I have been to see them. They would be glad to have the office in their store, and you couldn't find a better place or better men to be with."

"I'll move," said Bascom.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Acting on the report of the special agent the postoffice department appointed Bascom Clarke postmaster at Colfax, and accompanied the appointment with an order requiring the postoffice to be moved to within eighty rods of the railway station. The order was signed by Marshall Jewell, postmaster general under President Grant. The bond was duly executed by Waugh and Dunbar and the formal transfer was made by the department. Thereupon the new incumbent notified the patrons that after a fixed date the mail would be cared for in the new office at the drug store of Hayden & Teeguarden, located on the north side of the "Dolly Varden" tracks. The Apache Indians, leaving the reservation to go on a rampage, could not have made more noise with their warwhoops than was contained in the howl which went up from the Cobtownites.

A deputation of "leading citizens," headed by John Girt, who had been most instrumental in persuading Trotter to change his recommendation from Clarke to the undertaker, crowded into the postoffice to labor with the "erring" young man, and persuade him to alter his decision.

"Yes, I know all about you and your friendship for me," declared Bascom. "When I talked to you about my appointment to the place, you pretended to be for me. You was the one who persuaded Abner Trotter to read my name into the letter to the postoffice department, when you knew he was recommending another man. Do you think I need any fatherly advice from a traitor to me? Not on your life. The office is going to be moved."

"You can't get a man in this town to go on your bond as postmaster. Who knows anything about you? You drift up here from down south somewhere and if you think

anybody's goin' to trust you with the government money you're mightily mistaken."

"Oh, I've got my bondsmen all right, and I'm not beholden to the likes of you for them. There are two men on my bond, not two sneaks."

"You are going a bit too far with your language, young man," said another of the delegation, as he moved a little nearer as though to threaten the postmaster.

"I'm not usin' language half as strong as I'd like to. But you can't browbeat me or bluff me. This foremost citizen of yours is sorta hintin' that I ain't good enough to mix with you; that there's some sort of cloud on my name. My father and mother are both dead, but I stand here to protect the name they gave me against the dirty mouth of your spokesman. And if I hear any more of that kind of talk there'll be somebody hurt."

"We'll see that your bondsmen withdraw. We'll protest your appointment to General Grant," piped up another.

"I ain't afraid of your getting my bondsmen off. Neither of them has scraped off the image of their Maker and put on the coat of the devil. They were built accordin' to the original plans and specifications of the Almighty, and they believe in old-fashioned honesty and square dealin'. As for General Grant: My folks was on the other side in the war, but he fought square and gave a square deal to my people when they were licked. I'll take my chances with him."

"We hate to appeal to force," said the original spokesman, "but you won't move that office."

"I'd hate to leave behind me such a stench as would arise from the blood of such creatures as you," retaliated Clarke, "but I give you fair warnin' not to interfere with me in the discharge of my duty. It won't be wise. Good day, gentlemen."

He turned to his work, white with anger, but holding himself well in check. The delegation, with its members muttering threats under their breath, departed.

The next day, Jim Arrick, the town lawyer, who had

been made into a barrister from a country preacher, because the latter occupation was not proving sufficiently remunerative, came into the office wearing his most important air. He was backed by so much of the population that it amounted almost to a mob.

"Let me see your copy of the regulations," demanded Arrick.

Bascom gave him a copy of several years before. Arrick adjusted his spectacles, and proceeded to wade through the laws, rules and regulations governing and controlling the administration of the postal department. When he had gotten along pretty well with this copy, Clarke handed him another, with the remark:

"As long as you're lookin' up the law, elder, you might as well have plenty of books."

Arrick, who resented the term "elder" as indicating that he was a minister and not a lawyer, looked up for a moment and got ready to make a sharp retort, got a glimpse of the bland face with its innocent expression, thought better of it, and proceeded with dignified silence. His deliberations and search for the law took up so much time, and was so devoid of striking or exciting situations, that the crowd gradually dwindled down until no one was left except the lawyer.

"Now, elder—"

"Don't call me 'elder.' Call me Jim if you can't think of anything else."

"All right, Jim. Now that the fellers that hired you are gone, and you're sure of your money—"

"I'm not hired. I'm doin' this for the public weal," interrupted Arrick, striking his favorite attitude when addressing a political gathering at ten dollars per address.

"New role for you, ain't it, elder—I mean Jim?"

Before Arrick could recover to administer the verbal castigation, Clarke continued: "I was going to show you an easy way of earnin' your money. But if you're doin' it for the public weal you'd appear more like you was accomplishin' somethin' if you keep on porin' over those old regulations. But if you was gettin' paid, now, I could

put you next to somethin' that might end all your troubles."

"Well, what is it?"

"No, I don't believe in interferin' with a cuss when he's workin' unselfishly for the public. The public don't appreciate him if he don't work hard, whatever he accomplishes."

"Well, suppose I am working for money—what then?"

"Are you?"

"Well, of course there was something said about compensating me for my effort."

"But, did you get it, elder—I mean Jim?"

"Oh, yes, in a way. They gave me a retainer o' ten dollars."

"Sho! so much as that? Well, if you read this it may help you to form a definite and fixed opinion, after much careful study and deliberation and passin' sleepless nights in formin' your conclusions."

He turned over to Arrick the order from the postmaster general directing him to move the office to within eighty rods of the railway station.

"You see, Jim, the people should 'a' hired you before, and got out an injunction or somethin' of that sort to keep the railroad company from movin' the station down to the junction. The railroad company's a sight nearer to town than the postoffice department, and you might 'a' had a bigger pull with them. I've got my orders, Arrick, and I'm goin' to carry them out. You'd better advise your employers that it won't do to monkey with me when I'm representin' the United States of America. It may be a big job for a puny scrub like me, but I'll have an arsenal along with me in case I need it. It's kind o' funny, Jim, for me to be defendin' the gov'ment postoffice up here while my folks ain't got through givin' the rebel yell on the other side of the line."

Arrick departed, unable to carry much hope to the citizens. The order was plain, the postmaster was within his rights, and any interference, the lawyer knew, would invoke trouble with the government. Bascom did not

know this, and he prepared to move, fully believing that there might be forceful opposition.

Having heard of the threats made against Clarke, a delegation of Bucktownites came over on the morning of the moving to be ready in case of trouble. Alf McFarland screwed up his courage, and backed his white horse and two-wheeled dray up to the door of the postoffice. The government property and mail, together with the personal possessions of the new postmaster, were piled on. Clarke, with a loaded revolver in each hand, sat on the load. The procession moved away without molestation, however, accompanied by the cheers of the accompanying Bucktownites.

The new quarters were roomy and light, quite a contrast to either of the old locations. Clarke put in a new outfit of the latest pattern of postoffice equipment and made the place as attractive as possible. The proprietors of the drug store, realizing the valuable asset to their business which the presence of the postoffice made, did everything to make the place comfortable and convenient.

But Cobtown was not through with its opposition. What it had been unable to accomplish by force it now sought to bring about by boycott. The Cobtownites, knowing that the postmaster's compensation depended on the business he did, took all their mail to the station, instead of the postoffice, that the postmaster should not receive the credit for the stamp cancellations. The Bucktownites loyally swarmed to the aid of the office, and did missionary work to increase its revenue, but Clarke had to admit that the sledding was hard. It was two years before the feeling wore away sufficiently for the people to realize that they were not helping themselves to any great extent, and that both Clarke and Bucktown were living without them.

Then came the help he needed. Calvin Gault suspended publication of the Boswell Chronicle and brought his printing office to Colfax, establishing the Colfax Chronicle. Clarke, knowing everybody in the region roundabout, and having time while in the postoffice, consented to help

Gault in the way of items for the paper. His education was sadly deficient, but he was studying all the time, and by observation and a good memory gained a liberal, though not systematic training in the use of words, spelling and punctuation.

He did his best in writing the items for the paper, and, by watching the corrections made by Gault, learned rapidly. He seldom made the same mistake twice. He had an originality of expression which found its way into the paper and made it spicy reading. Local events were treated from the standpoint of one who knew intimately the entire population, while the gossip of the postoffice kept him in close touch with the events of the town and country.

Gault, on the other hand, backed him up in his postoffice fight, and by timely, well written and good-tempered editorials, gradually helped to create public sentiment in favor of the postmaster, even among the recalcitrant Cobtownites. Gradually the feeling wore away. The principals in the disturbance either moved away or transferred themselves, so far as business was concerned, to Bucktown, and peace reigned. The war was over, and the belligerent parties who were not hors de combat again joined hands for the general success of the town.

Clarke was growing under the stress of events, and a general favorite. His accommodating ways, considerate kindness and attention to his duties brought continued praise. His furnishing of items to the newspaper could not be long kept secret and he had a way of intuitively seeing a newspaper story which would have entitled him to the credit of having a "nose for news."

The offensive and defensive alliance formed with Gault continued without interruption during Gault's stay in Colfax. But the latter was weary of the one-man printing office. If he was editor, why should he stoop to the menial occupations of setting type, twisting the old Washington handpress, making up and tearing down forms, and treading the job press? So he welcomed the advent of a tramp printer, Riley Runyan, whose ability to stick the long

primer, set "ads," do job work and run any kind of a press appealed to Gault. Runyan paused in town for a drink and a meal, on his perigrination, struck the printing office with an offer to set type therefor, and at the solicitation of Gault remained as a partner.

The fact that it was a one-man printshop was disclosed very soon. It furnished Cal with a fair living, but would not support two of them, especially when both of them were inclined to "take no thought of the morrow." They determined that the field was hardly large enough for their joint ability, and they betook themselves to Thorn-town, not, however, without leaving Clarke with a burning desire to continue in the work of handing his opinions to the people in columns of cold type. This is nothing unusual, for a real newspaper man is never content, after having had a taste of the work, with any other demand which may be made upon his abilities. Bascom bided his time and the path was opened for him to follow his bent.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Colfax Chronicle had a checkered career, financially. Gault & Runyan had left it with a good sized chattel mortgage covering the property, and it had one or more of these interesting documents on file against it nearly all the time. These mortgages had been juggled with by transfers and re-transfers until William Jacobs, a red-headed Christian church preacher, was able to buy the plant for four hundred dollars, for which amount he gave his note. He had the bill of sale duly recorded, but evidently failed to have the chattel mortgage satisfied. He had for chief mechanic on the paper Charley Jarrell, who also boasted of a beautiful saffron tint to his hair. About the first thing Jacobs did was to approach Clarke one day, well knowing the latter's anxiety to engage in newspaper work.

"Say, Doc, how would you like to own the Chronicle?"

"Why, I'd like it all right, but I haven't any money to buy it with."

"I'll let you have it for what I gave for it, four hundred dollars. I've got a call to come to Illinois, and I feel that I must accept it."

"I can't raise four hundred dollars," responded Clarke, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll lease the property from you and pay you sixty-five dollars a year rent."

Jacobs finally agreed to do this, and a lease was accordingly made out by which Clarke took over the plant and assumed editorial control. It is possible Jacobs knew there was trouble ahead, owing to the non-satisfaction of the chattel mortgage and his inability to meet payment on the note. At any rate he disappeared from Colfax, and returned to Illinois. Before going, however, he left the address of his father with Bascom that the new proprietor might send the rent money through him to the

son. Jarrell agreed to stay and manage the mechanical end of the property on a partnership basis.

All went well until Jarrell was taken with the "high hat and kid glove fever," when he concluded to throw overboard his useless partner, as he deemed Bascom. Clarke had been industriously equipping himself for the work, and, while Jarrell was taking the credit, the fact was that most of the paper was the result of earnest toil on the part of the postmaster. Jarrell boarded with Clarke, without pay, and was given a home as one of the family. Jarrell, knowing the circumstances under which Jacobs obtained the plant, and having discovered that the old chattel mortgage was still on record, went up to Fort Wayne and entered into negotiations with Gideon Seavey, a curly-headed, red-headed lawyer, who held the first claim against the Chronicle outfit.

Suspicioning his partner's duplicity and afterwards confirming it, Bascom got into correspondence with the preacher and obtained a bill of sale from him for the property. He knew from the satisfied manner of Jarrell that he had been successful in his arrangements with Seavey and that trouble could be looked for. Not a word did he say to the scheming partner, however, until he had the whiphand. The mutual disclosure came at the Clarke table at supper. Without a cent of compensation he had boarded with the Clarks for nearly a year. On this night, just after the meal was over, Jarrell pushed his chair back and casually remarked:

"Well, Doc, our partnership will cease tomorrow. I won't need you any longer."

Clarke calmly waited until the statement was completed, and then said:

"You are right about the end of our business relations. You will oblige me by removing your personal effects from my home as well as the office, not tomorrow, but tonight. I don't want you around either place after the length of time it takes you to get your things together. You think I have been in the dark as to your scheming, but I have known all about what you have been

trying to do to me while eating at my table and living in my house. A man who will seek to undermine another in a business matter while accepting his hospitality is akin to the fellow who comes to make a social call when he knows he has the smallpox. You aren't fit to be in my house, and you certainly aren't worthy of my respect. So get out."

He laid the bill of sale from the preacher under Jarrell's nose, as the latter sat stunned by the turn matters had taken.

"There are too many red heads mixed up in this business for it to thrive well, and we'll just follow the Scriptures that the last to come shall be the first to go. Don't stand on the order of your going but rid us of your despicable carcass just as soon as you can."

Jarrell's face looked like a mixture of chalk and pokeberry juice as he realized that his hand had been called, and that he had lost. He gathered up his belongings under the eye of the householder; they went to the office, where Bascom watched him while he obtained his personal possessions, and the deposed partner then left.

He did not leave town, however, but remained around to tell the people that Clarke didn't know enough to run the paper and that it would be a sorry looking affair when it came out. Further, he took everybody into his confidence and gave them the information that he would soon be in possession of the paper; that in fact he rightfully owned it now, but was being kept out of his rights by the postmaster. Clarke kept his own counsel, but advised his friends not to worry. The paper would be out in some sort of shape, and they could then determine whether or not it was in capable hands.

Fortunately the new sole proprietor obtained the services of a Frenchman named Barron, as efficient a printer as there was in the state of Indiana, and a thoroughly educated man. Within a few days he was in the office and making good. He still had the two Irish boys as helpers. Clarke threw himself into the editorial work of the first issue after Jarrell's ousting, and so earnestly did he labor

that it was not only as good as any of the preceding, but from a newspaper standpoint it was better. Then, this issue was followed by others, and from the quality of matter contained in it all the town came to realize that in reality it was Clarke who had been the spirit of the paper before.

"Doc" laid out a "sanctum" with a carpet on the floor and neat furniture. In this secluded spot he could cogitate and work, and receive callers. A door opened from this room into the printshop, that he might be in touch with affairs there. Everything ran like clockwork and peace reigned.

Jarrell had hung around town, having notified Seavey of his failure to obtain possession of the office. Seavey promised to come down and see that the "trespassing interloper" was thrown out of the office and Jarrell triumphantly placed therein. With a knowing air the evicted partner walked around and, in addition to doing all he could to injure Clarke and his business, bade the people to "just wait and they'd hear something drop."

The promised "drop" proved to be Gideon Seavey, the red-headed lawyer, who dropped from the "Dolly Varden" train one day, shook hands with Jarrell and had a short conference with him. Bascom saw that the time was at hand and cleared the decks for action. In the drawer of the editorial table was a convenient six-shooter. He hastily explained the situation to the French foreman and the two Irish assistants, and bade them arm themselves with steel "side-sticks" and be ready to wield them if necessary. The "side stick" (to explain to the uninitiate) was a tapered piece of steel as long as the page of the paper. By a series of wedges placed between it and the "chase" or frame containing the page of type, it helped to hold the type in place so that the "form" or page of type could be carried about and put on the press, and remain in place during the process of printing. It can readily be believed that the "sidesticks" proved most formidable weapons.

The Frenchman quickly caught the trend of affairs, as did the two Irish lads, who were not only spoiling for a fight on general principles, but they deemed it a pleasure to fight for their employer, to whom they were loyal to the last meaning of that term.

"Leave him to us," said the foreman, "We'll pi his form so that the devil himself can't lock it up again."

"Yis, lave 'im tuh us," said one of the Irish lads whom Clarke had befriended on more than one occasion, and whose mother had frequently called upon the "Holy Mother" to bless and protect "Doc" for his help to her in her poverty. "Lave 'im tuh us, an' yez'll see a shindy worth lookin' at."

"We'll fix him so his own mother won't know 'im," valiantly vouchsafed the younger of the lads, who enjoyed the title of "devil," his due under the printing office rules.

The preparations complete, the editor went into the sanctum, lit a stogie, put his feet on the table and began examining the exchanges as though no storm were brooding, or, if it were, he had his lightning rods all in place and well grounded, all leaks in the roof repaired and the eaves ready to carry off the water. Seavey came stamping up the stairs. He neglected to pay his respects to the editorial department, but went immediately into the composing room. Taking out the chattel mortgage given by Gault & Runyan, years before, he snorted:

"I hereby take possession of my property under this mortgage!"

"You'll take posession of hell in about two seconds if you don't get out of here," responded the fiery Frenchman.

"Where is the man who pretends to claim my property?" he shouted.

This was Clarke's cue, and he called from the sanctum:

"Silence in the composing room!"

That was enough. Into the room came Seavey in his most belligerent manner. He was followed by the composing room detachment, each bearing his murderous

side stick. Seavey did not look around at them, but made immediately for the table where Bascom sat in seeming calm. Clarke pulled out the drawer of the table, so that his artillery might be within easy reach, and waited the onslaught.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Seavey," he said. "I thought it might be the apparition of the Reverend William Jacobs, or it might be that other red-headed friend of mine, Charley Jarrell, come to get something forgotten in his hasty leavetaking."

"You contemptible thief," shouted Seavey. "You will try to steal my property, will you."

The editor let him go on without interruption. The lawyer hurled epithets and abuse at everybody from Adam down to Gault, Runyan and Jacobs, winding up with a streak of vile and approbrious epithets reflecting on Clarke, finally ending with an insult to the latter's mother.

"Stop! and stop now!" said Clarke, as his gun came out of the drawer with its muzzle looking into Seavey's eyes. "Say what you please so long as you don't charge me with dishonor or insult my mother's memory. Sit down and talk like a man or leave this room before it's too late."

Seavey eyed the gun, took a look at the expression on the face of Clarke, and saw there a determination which he had not expected. He calmed down, took a chair and inside of ten minutes had apologized for his conduct, reached an understanding, put out his hand and said:

"I give in, young man. You're on the square and I'm in the wrong. You have the legal title to the property, whatever mistakes may have been made with those I trusted. I acknowledge that you have had no hand in the crooked part of the deal by which I have been cheated out of my money. You have voluntarily agreed to assume a part of the burden, when there is no law on earth could make you, simply because you see I have been unjustly dealt with. I take off my hat to you, sir, as to a man, and from this time forth if there is anything I can do to be of service you have but to call."

As Clarke took the hand he answered :

“I want to get along in the world, Seavey, but I don’t want a cent of crooked money. I’ve fought my way almost inch by inch to make good on the name I bear, and I shall never discredit it by a dishonorable act. I may be a two-by-four in size and a shingle nail so far as wealth is concerned, but I’ve a wife and baby, honesty, ambition and industry, and that ought to be enough to make a man reasonably happy. If a couple of fellows at variance, like you and me, will only take time to sit down and talk things over quietly and calmly, it won’t take long to arrive at an understanding, but with tempers like yours and mine it seems as though there has to be about so much dynamite exploded before we can get down to the bed-rock of reason. I thought you were a bulldozing shyster trying to beat me out of my property and you thought I was a thief in unlawful possession of yours. We have each discovered the mistake. I am glad it has ended this way and pledge you my friendship.”

Seavey didn’t stop to consult with Jarrell, but took the next train home, leaving with Clarke the sole ownership and possession of the Colfax Chronicle, without lien or hindrance.

CHAPTER XX.

Country newspaper life, lived as it has to be lived, is something of an education in breadth and a thorough test of the powers of endurance. It is a hard school in strict economy, a constant stimulant to ingenuity and a certain training in discernment. It is a perpetual encyclopedia of inconsequential affairs grown to importance through the magnifying glasses of local significance.

Take the country editor out of a town and it might as well be off the earth. Think of it! No glowing accounts of weddings, no congratulatory announcements of births, and no tearfully written obituaries with which to fill the home scrap book. No joke on Jim Smith, enjoyed by all except Jim; no description of the new barn at Spikes nor comment on the improvement made by the painting of Jones's house; no telling of the visit of Helen James, of Indianapolis, with the family of Zebedee Willis, nor of the party given in her honor; no one to chronicle the departure of Grandma Wiggins to visit her daughter, the wife of a prominent business men in Terre Haute; and so on through the events of a country town.

Then, in the old days before rural delivery, the postmaster was the most important personage. Through him communication was maintained with the outer world. Deprived of the pleasure of gathering to "wait for the mail to be distributed," and watching the box to see if the unseen forces behind would propel a letter therein, a certain percentage of enjoyment would be lost. And gossiping with the dignitary through the little window, giving and taking the latest observations on current topics, during an idle moment on both sides of the partition, was an opportunity for mutual confidences not to be lightly valued. This was especially true if the postmaster still

possessed "red blood," and was alive to the things going on around him.

Therefore, when Bascom B. Clarke found himself occupying both responsible positions—editor and postmaster—he worked overtime to successfully administer the two. Of course "press night," namely, the night before the day on which the paper was dated, was a busy time. Then it was that the last batch of items was set by the compositors, the forms made up and laid on the "bed" of the old handpress and the paper was printed through the writhing, swinging and twisting pull on the lever. Then came the folding and addressing of these for local consumption, and the added wrapping of those destined for the out-going mail. The work of handling the Chronicle after it came from the press was in the hands of Clarke, and many a time the sun came up before his task was finished.

When old A. N. Kellogg invented "patent insides," by which a country printer could purchase his paper in Chicago, half printed with a good selection of miscellaneous matter and news, he made it possible for a respectable country newspaper to be printed where otherwise it would have been practically impossible. The "patents" cost but little more than the bare white paper, and Kellogg made his money principally from the advertising matter on his part of the sheet, the revenue from which belonged to him. Although the originator Kellogg did not enjoy a monopoly of the business, for "patent" houses sprang up in all the commercial centers. So Clarke had his patents from Indianapolis, and under the supervision of Barron, his printer, the paper was typographically neat.

No matter how much of a necessity to the community he was, the country editor, in those days, was looked upon largely as a luxury. The advertisers considered their displays as so much contribution to a public enterprise, and expected the genius who ran the paper to trade most of the account out at the "emporium." The subscribers were in the habit of paying in cordwood, vegetables and other products of the farm, when belonging to the out-of-

town contingent, and by services, if a town dweller. The barber, or rather "tonsorial artist," paid his in shaves, the cobbler cobbled and the blacksmith forged, the doctor doctored and the drayman hauled. An occasional legal notice and the fellow who paid in cash because he couldn't think of a good excuse not to, together with most of the receipts from the job department of the print shop, helped to put some actual money into the hands of the proprietor. But it was not an exorbitant amount, and the earnings of the postoffice had to be appealed to more than once to enable him to raise sufficient circulating medium to meet current expenses. He might trade advertising space and subscriptions for the things to eat and wear, but every month the "patent" people demanded settlement for the paper delivered and had to have cash, while the employes in the printing office looked for a certain percentage, at least, of their wages in real money. Getting this money together, gathering and writing the news, placating the offended or "standing pat" when such course was justified, dodging or defending libel suits, attending all the public affairs in the village, drawing an occasional deed or mortgage or taking an acknowledgment as "notary public," besides keeping the postoffice running so that the public service should not be impeded, gave Clarke a somewhat strenuous life.

There was no question about his having an original way of looking at things and this originality crept into his writings. Once in awhile this tart dressing to his journalistic pabulum was a trifle too strong of acid to be relished by the party most concerned, and trouble resulted. Thus, a three-line item concerning the quality of ice-cream furnished at the "parlors" of Fred. Hallowell, irritated that personage. It was written in a joking strain, but there was just enough truth in the veiled suggestion that he was stinting the quality of it, to make him squirm. He knew that he was cheating his customers, and he also was certain, from the item, that the editor was at least suspicious of the fact. Hallowell, in the old days, had been ring-leader of the "Never-Sweats,"

a gang of roisterers whose principal occupation consisted in "jokes" which usually involved destruction of property and the stealing of inconsequential things, not of sufficient value to make the victims prosecute, but annoying and aggravating.

Hallowell had gotten through his boyhood without much work, and the habit of laziness sat heavily upon him. He figured that a refreshment stand, with a little room in behind for a "social game," would come as near "no work" as he could hope for, and would allow him to be reckoned with as a business man. But his lack of industry and his dishonesty cropped out here. He found that he could "short-change" his patrons in the quality of things served in the restaurant and did it. When the item appeared in the Chronicle he did not dare to show his feelings openly when joked about it, but prided himself on his ability to get even in another way.

Calling to his aid a few old cronies he essayed, one night, to put the town donkey into the sanctum of the editor with suitable labels to demonstrate that he was in his rightful place and a fit substitute for the regular occupant. But the native stubbornness of the beast, together with the narrowness of the doorway and stairs, compelled the abandonment of the undertaking after several hours of labor. By "grapevine telegraph" Clarke was apprised of the attempt and failure. This was meat for the pencil of the local newsgatherer, who enjoyed a joke on himself as well as on the other fellow. But in concluding his account he took occasion to remark that he could not understand why they had gone to all that trouble, "when a bigger jackass in the person of Fred Hallowell could get through the doorway and up the stairs without difficulty."

This shot went home and, with scarification and irritation given by the laughing comments of the townspeople, caused Hallowell to rise in his wrath and swear vengeance. Though a giant in size he was a coward by nature. He had bulldozed and tantalized smaller boys in his younger days, and by his size in later years had bluffed his way

more than once. But he was afraid of Clarke, for he had never been able to make the latter realize his greatness or forget the fact that he was a good-for-nothing loafer all his life.

A few days afterwards Charlie Holmes came into the postoffice. He had been ill for some time and walked slowly and with difficulty. In response to the cheery greeting of the postmaster, after making sure there was no one in hearing distance he said :

"Doc, they're plannin' to kill you."

"Who's planning to kill me, Charlie?"

"Fred Hallowell and a big nigger."

"How do you know? Tell me all about it."

"Well, you know I've been sick, Doc. It was pleasant today, and I was lying on top of a pile of lumber down by the tracks when I heard Fred Hallowell promise to give a big nigger that's been 'round town some time fifty dollars if he'd 'do you up,' and he agreed to do it to-night. For God's sake, Doc, don't let 'em know I told you or they'd kill me."

Bascom grasped the hand of the boy and said :

"Thank you for coming to me, Charlie. I won't let any one know you told me and I'll take care of myself and them, too."

Putting a gun in his pocket he left the postoffice and started first to find the negro. He was not long in locating the burly black and walked up to him.

"My name's Clarke. I'm the man Hallowell has hired you to 'do up.' Take a good look at me, so you'll know-me next time you see me, for that will be in about a half an hour if you're not out of town by that time, and when you do see me I'll pump you so full of lead that they'll have to get a derrick to load you in the undertaker's wagon. Now go, and go quick. I'm a little nervous and I'm afraid I won't be able to wait the full half hour."

The "nigger" took one look at his accuser, noticed that Clarke's right hand was toying close to his back pocket. Then he went up the track and out of town. He did not return.

The editor now hunted up Hallowell, whom he located in Dan White's hardware store. As he walked up to him it was like the contrast in size between David and Goliath. When Hallowell saw him he grew pale, for there was a glint in the eye of Bascom that he did not like.

"So you're the man, are you," began Clarke, "who hasn't the courage to do his own dirty work, and has to hire a nigger to do his killing for him."

Dan White carefully stepped over and closed the door. He knew Hallowell and his character. This promised to be something of an interesting episode, and it wasn't necessary to have any other witnesses.

"I—I don't know what you mean," stammered Hallowell.

"Oh, yes you do, and so do I. You hired a big buck nigger to kill me, and have contracted to pay him fifty dollars for the job. That nigger is now making tracks for Indianapolis as fast as his dirty feet will carry him. You've been a cowardly sneak and a disgrace to the name of man ever since you struck this town, and now you would add murder to the list of crimes you have committed. I ought to kill you now and here, defenseless and unwarned, as you planned to have me killed. But I won't do it. That would place me on a level with you and your nigger consort. I am going to give you the same chance I gave him. You have evidently determined that the town is too small for both of us. Very well, I accept the edict as you have laid it down. It's too bad for you that your hired assassin concluded to throw up the job. You'll have to do it yourself. But I'm here to tell you that, knowing you have threatened my life, and prepared to meet my Maker as I am, I'll manage to get in one or two shots at you myself while you are engaged in your occupation of ridding the town of me. If you are here in town I'll take it that you have determined that you are of more use to it than me. I have a feeling that the world would be better without you and hell dirtier and more contaminating with you. I don't relish the job of being the instrument of Providence which removes you

from this mundane sphere and adds to the population of the already overcrowded lake of brimstone. But I'll do my best not to leave a widow for the town to look after. So, when you're ready to carry out your threat I'll be waiting for you. I'll take no chances. Don't cross my path again, for if you do I will know that you've spurred your cowardly carcass to do your own murderous work and I'll shoot you on sight. That's all."

He deliberately turned his back on Hallowell and walked the full length of the hardware store to the door and out onto the street without once looking behind, thus showing his contempt for his enemy and his confidence that he would not dare to attack him openly. Clarke was wrought up to a high pitch, so much that on his way home that night he nearly took a shot at Mike Northrup, one of his best friends, who was about the size of Hallowell, and who waited for the editor to come up. Northrup caught the gleam of the revolver and spoke in time. The thought that he might have killed his friend preyed upon Bascom heavily all night.

Northrup was up town early the next morning and after a consultation Doctor Parker informed Hallowell that he must make his peace with Clarke immediately or leave town. Thoroughly frightened, he sought and obtained an interview with Clarke in which he begged for his forgiveness, and acknowledged his wrong. Quick to resent a wrong he was even more ready to forgive, and Hallowell was told that so far as the editor was concerned he had nothing to fear. But he urged the man to change his manner of living and be a credit to the community.

"Fred," he concluded, "the devil never gives much credit to the man that serves him and your pay's darn small, but God rolls up a hundred dollars in money or satisfaction with every one you spend for him. If I were you I'd give the old fork-tailed chap a wide berth and come out in the open. The people will forget all you've done to them and stand by you if you're square. I'll wipe the slate of this little affair which might have ended in a tragedy and do what I can to help you. But you've

got to do it yourself, so far as facing about is concerned. You never saw a grub that helped the corn to grow or a boll-weevil that had a crop of cotton to his credit. And you never saw a human parasite, or a hater of mankind that eventually garnered a harvest of happiness. I'll be for you if you're right and I'll be everlastingly against you if you're wrong."

Hallowell promised reformation, but early dropped into his old ways, and with his gang soon took to making things unpleasant in the town. While ostensibly he had made his peace with Clarke the whole proceeding seemed to rankle in his heart, and throwing his good resolutions to the winds he started on a career of lawlessness.

Finally, when he began dynamiting buildings, thus jeopardizing human life as well as destroying property, a self constituted vigilance committee, after becoming certain of the author of the outrages, prepared to deal out to him summary punishment. Clarke, however, interceded and saved his life. He was warned to leave, however, and soon moved away.

Some years afterwards, Gilbert Hamilton, of Thornton, who succeeded Clarke as editor of the Chronicle, wrote a postal card to the latter in his Wisconsin home. It read as follows:

"Fred Hallowell rode over the range last night. He had an altercation in the middle of the road with a man whom he threatened as he threatened you. Two shots were fired. Hallowell's in hell now. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

CHAPTER XXI.

During all this time his leg, which had become infected in Arkansas, was giving Clarke more or less trouble, and no treatment given afforded more than temporary relief. Freeman Teeguarden, one of the proprietors of the drug store in which the postoffice was located, came to Bascom one day.

"Doc," he said, "there's a couple of spiritualist fellows in town who have been doin' some unexplainable things. Why don't you see 'em about that leg of yours?"

"What good could they do? All the doctors have taken a whack at it and you don't suppose these fellows could shoo it away, do you?"

"I don't know as they could do anything, but there ain't no harm in tryin'. They can't hurt you any."

"Well, I don't believe in any of that sort of stuff, and I know you don't because you don't believe in any kind of religion."

"I know I ain't overly strong on religion, Doc, but these fellows are doing things I can't account for, and I wouldn't care what they called it if they was doin' good and helpin' folks. The proof of a man's religion is what it does for him, and what it makes him do for his fellows. You've said that to me yourself, many times, when you was arg'ing some of your Methodist doctrines. I've allus said to you that I don't know nothin' about it, and so I don't believe nothin' about it. That's all. But I've got respect for what the other fellow thinks, and I ain't goin' to destroy his faith just because I can't fathom the reason for it. I realize that you may do more harm by makin' a man doubt than you can sidin' in with him on his religion, and you ain't never heard me tellin' a chap there wasn't nothin' in it when he was arg'in' religion. That's between himself and God. If a man's got religion I say

let him do somethin' with it 'sides sittin' back as though he was elected to glory and go on cheatin' and grindin' in business as though his religion didn't have nothin' to do with that."

"Say, Freem, you'll be preaching a sermon next."

"No, I'd make a mighty poor preacher, though some of 'em ain't a bad lot if you c'n git down underneath their preacher coat and git at the man. They have a hard lot to my thinkin'. Their churches treat 'em most as if they was beggars, and begrudge every cent they git, and if they can't run 'em they hev to set there and wait with their ear in the air for the Lord to call them to another field. Sometimes, too, the Lord's call they hear to move somewhere else is mighty like the jingle of more money than they're gettin'."

"The laborer is worthy his hire, you know, Freeman."

"Oh, I ain't sayin' they oughtn't to git more money, and that they oughtn't to take more money when they can git it, but I don't want 'em to measure the quality of the Lord's voice by the size of the salary paid."

"But, Freeman, these spiritualists or whatever they are charge money for their services, don't they?"

"Gosh, I nearly forgot about those fellows. They don't charge. They take what you give 'em."

"How'd you happen to get drawn into their performance?"

"Why, I know both of them, o' course. And you do, too. One is George Harbaugh, the harness maker, and the other is Harry Kingsbury. They ain't got any education, but they discovered that they was able to do funny things, and heard voices and such like. Somebody told them it was spirits, and they felt the call to go out and do things. Ain't they got just as much right to have a call from the A'mighty as anyone else?"

"Sure! Look at the fishermen and other fellows that became great teachers of goodness through the call of Christ."

"Yes. Well, as I said, they had the call and started out. They go into some kind of a spell and God knows

where they get the stuff they chatter, I don't. Neither do I think the fellows can invent it, because it would take a smart man to hatch up a fraud in the things they're doin' and neither of them is more'n ordinary."

"What is the language they use?"

"They say it's Injun talk and maybe 'tis. I ain't long on languages. It may be Chinese for all I know, but I do know they're doin' some strange things, and if they can cure your leg what in thunder do you care what they are or claim to be?"

"Oh, I wouldn't care what they called themselves, but I don't believe they can do it."

"You don't have to believe. That's the funny part of it. All you got to do is to let 'em work on you. I'd like to see you with a well leg, Doc. I sure would, and I've taken' the liberty of talkin' with 'em about it."

"You have! And what did they say?"

"They said they didn't know what they could do till the spirits told 'em."

"Do you expect me to believe that the spirits will come down to these fellows and show 'em how to cure a sore leg, especially on a cuss that hasn't any faith in them at all?"

"I don't expect you to believe nothin'. Tain't like you was goin' to take a lot of medicine that might upset your innards, or they was goin' to put some stuff on your leg that might make you have to have it cut off afterwards. They just put out their hands and say their 'eeny-meeny-mony-mi-posca-lana-boni-stry,' and the rest of it, and if it works you're 'it.' That's all there is to it."

"They want to do it out in public, don't they?"

"Why, yes. But everybody in town knows you've got a bad leg, don't they? If they do, what's the difference? If they don't help you it hurts them, don't it? They've got as many chances to take as you have, and if they do help you what do you care what people think? If they don't help you you can say, 'I told you so,' and that's all there'll be to it."

"You haven't gone proselyting for these spiritualists, have you, Freeman Teeguarden?"

"I ain't proselytin' for nobody, but I'd like to see your leg cured."

"All right, old man. I'll just go you. Tell them I'll be their victim, or subject, or whatever it is, if for no other reason than to demonstrate my appreciation of your thoughtfulness. But you're the last man I'd expect to go off on a religious tangent. It's worth the experiment just to see you interested in any kind of religion."

"Don't joke about it, Doc. I know you ain't had much call to count me among the saints, but I don't believe there's a man livin' who doesn't, way down in his heart, think on these things, even if his thoughts along that line don't bubble up to the surface much. I don't know nothin' about this spiritualism business, but what I see I can see, can't I? They can't fake your leg on me, can they? And they can't pretend to have helped it and not done it, with me here and helpin' you dress it as many times as I have? We'll see what they can do and then talk about belief and unbelief afterwards."

When it came time, therefore, the postmaster-editor went on the table and the performance,—if that is the term—began. The two men no sooner laid hands on him that he felt as though he was in a fiery furnace. Great waves of heat ran up and down his body and centered in his affected limb. While they were in the midst of it the operators suddenly stopped, consulted for a moment in an unknown tongue, and one of them spoke:

"Too much clothes on white man. Injun say stop till clothes are off. We go somewhere and take clothes off."

So operations were suspended and Clarke, with a few of his intimate friends, went into the printing office. He stripped himself and they went at it again. There was no question that some peculiar phenomenon was being experienced by him, and he could not doubt that there was some kind of change going on in the leg. When they had been working for some time, rapidly, vigorously, they ceased their efforts, returned apparently to their normal

condition and told the subject that they would continue their efforts on the morrow. This programme was repeated daily for nearly a week, at the end of which time there rolled off from the leg a mass of diseased tissue, leaving it in a comparatively healthy condition. Asked for an explanation afterwards, Clarke said:

"I can't explain. I am like the blind man in the Bible, who said, 'One thing I know: that whereas I was blind, now I see.' One thing I know: whereas I had a bad leg, now it is better. I take it as coming from God, whatever the means of communication may have been. I have always been in the habit of giving God the credit of any blessings that came to me, and I never put the burden of responsibility for misfortune on His shoulders. If, as these men believe, their peculiar power comes through spirits in direct contact with us through them, let it be so. I don't always stop to look at the name of the builder when I cross a bridge, but I none the less pay tribute to the excellence of his work when I venture without fear to use it. His name may not appear among those accepted by the self-constituted authorities on architecture, and they may even ridicule the possibility that anyone other than the elect could build a bridge. But it is there and we use it. I take it there may be some such condition in creeds. You and I may not have even heard of a belief and yet its follower may get close to God in his peculiar form of worship. I'm with Teeguarden: A man's religion is entitled to be measured by what it does for him, and what it enables him and prompts him to do for his fellow man. When a man declares he has discovered the only creed by which a man can get to Heaven, and spends all his time criticising other beliefs instead of seeking how he can demonstrate the good effects of his religion on himself and his fellows, you may be sure that, though the road itself may be right, St. Peter won't give him much of a welcome when he reaches the end. I think about the first thing he'll ask is not 'What do you believe?' but, 'What have you been doing?' "

"I don't know how you feel about this thing, Doc,"

said Teeguarden, "But I ain't satisfied to stop here. If God's got any hand in this business I want to know it."

"That's where you've been wrong all this time, Freeman. God has a hand in all good work, and you wouldn't acknowledge it. This ain't the only miracle the world has seen or will see. When Doc Parker studied and worked to learn his profession, and then when he saved the life of old man Beemis the other day it was a miracle, and God had a hand in it, working through Doc Parker. But he began working out the miracle a long time ago. When I came up here after losing all my folks, and was taken out of Old Man Smith's hands, and when I came into town, and finally got a chance to live and be somebody, I was working out a miracle."

"Yes, but Doc, didn't you ever think that maybe your mother and grandmother and folks was watchin' you and helpin' you?"

"Have you got so you believe in it, Freeman?"

"I ain't sayin' how far I've got, but it looks as if I was gettin' there."

"Well, peace be with you! That's all I can say."

Teeguarden came to be one of the mainstays of the spiritualists in northern Indiana and his home was many times used for seances by those of that faith. Clarke, when he saw the earnestness with which his friend accepted the belief, after the years that he had been apathetic on all religious questions, he forbore any suggestion or criticism.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "I wonder what controlled those men when they were working on me?"

And he never answered the question to his own satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXII.

The probability is that the Jenkins family Bible would not give the name that way, but according to the chronicles of the village boys the particular Jenkins in whom they were interested bore the title Philander Philester Peter Sylvester George Washington Christopher Columbus H. Jenkins. This may have been due to the fact that he stammered so that when he pronounced his name it sounded something like the combination given. Of course the full name was seldom used except when Sylvester manifested a disposition to be vexed over its use, at which time his tormentors would recite it in chorus. It was said that there were only two occasions on which his impediment was unnoticeable, namely, when he swore and when he prayed. At such time the strings on his tongue were loosened and the words would roll out in an undammed torrent. It is needless to say that with the knowledge of this peculiarity in possession of his fellows the opportunities were frequently given for indulgence in straight talk by Jenkins, and it was usually the reverse of praying. Despite his limitation of speech, "Ves" succeeded in training himself as a ventriloquist, and discovered that his ventriloquial voice also came out unfettered. It was a great find for him, and he practiced diligently until he was master of the art. He entertained the young men of the town with private exhibitions of his skill at divers times, and his proficiency could not be gainsaid.

At about the time of Bascom's advent into Colfax, one Aaron Weir descended upon the village. He was an expert lather and could drive more nails than any man before or since his time. He would fill his mouth with lath nails and with one hand holding the hatchet and the other supplying ammunition, he would nail a hundred yards before the ordinary man would seemingly get ready

to hit the first nail. Because his name was Aaron he was dubbed "Moses," almost before he was sufficiently acquainted in the town to warrant such familiarity. Weir was the dude of the community. When not at work he dressed himself in a perfect fitting suit, blacked his shoes till they shone like mirrors, carefully oiled and combed his hair and topped it all with a silk hat. Shades of Chesterfield! Could the town stand for it? Well, it did, and Aaron proved not so bad a fellow. To be sure, he assumed the air of a much traveled man, and one wise to the vanities of the world, but he probably had a right to the assumption. He earned good wages, big money for those times, on account of his superior skill, and was a liberal spender.

Aaron heard Jenkins in his ventriloquism and conceived the idea of putting it to profit. So the firm of Weir and Jenkins was organized for the show business with "Ves" for the principal performer and "Moses" as advance agent, publicity man, business manager and ring-master. "Peter Hunch" and "Judy," the puppets that were to move their jaws and wag their heads, simulating the conversations which the ventriloquist was to furnish them, were brought from Chicago, and "Ves" put in all his spare time and some more getting the swing of the lingo.

The "Society of Uplift" in Colfax decided that as the show originated in the village the local people ought to have the opportunity to enjoy the performance before it went out to take its place with the amusement enterprises of the world. By a little persuasion Weir and Jenkins consented to the arrangement, especially when it was announced to them that the trustees of the school district agreed to permit the use of the school house free for the exhibition, a concession wrested from them by Clarke and his compatriots of the "Uplifters" on the representation that they would help advertise the town.

Had the two individuals most interested realized the evening in store for them, they doubtless would have dodged, even with the offer of a free show room, and gone elsewhere to begin their career. But, believing implicitly

in the merit of the performance to be given they tried to act as though they had been in the business all their lives. Aaron, with an extra touch of wax on his mustache, and arrayed in his "Sunday-go-to-meetin's," walked with impressive dignity up and down the streets making the necessary arrangements for the show. "Ves," with a newly acquired swagger, posed at different places in the village that the wondering eyes of the public might behold him ere he departed to rise to that place where Lawrence Barrett and P. T. Barnum would crave his acquaintance.

If the Biblical saying, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country," was not proven on the night of the entertainment, it never will be. All the male portion of the town was there, and nothing but standing room was to be had by the late comers. Through sundry quiet hints the feminine Colfaxites had concluded to remain at home. Aaron, as master of ceremonies, introduced "Professor" Jenkins, the "world renowned ventriloquist, whose marvelous ability to throw his voice from place to place would challenge the admiration of all." He congratulated the "city" of Colfax on having "produced such a genius," and prophesied that he would astonish this country and wrest glory from the old world.

"Professor" Jenkins appeared and was greeted with a long continued outburst of applause. The puppets were placed in position and the show began. Getting the range the sound came as of the bleating of sheep in the distance, and then a voice broke in with "Here, Bull! Here, Bull!"

Somebody in the audience responded with a well simulated "Bow-wow-wow-gr-r-r-r-r" of a dog. The "Professor" was disconcerted and mad at the interruption, and he took occasion to let loose a chain of "cuss words" not in the long practiced programme. Dog-howls and sheep bleats responded from all parts of the house.

Little Sammy Jenkins, a brother of the performer, had insisted on having a seat on the stage that the people might know that he was a blood relative of the performer. Fearing that his brother's speech might fail him in a

situation so desperate he demonstrated his early and complete education in the art of picturesque epithets. Jenkins pulled a horse pistol that looked like the entrance to the tunnel under East River, and declared his readiness to use the same if the disturbance did not stop. This had the effect of quieting the house for a few minutes and the performance proceeded.

"Peter Hunch" had just commenced his altercation with his wife, "Judy," when Peter laughed. Amidst the applause, which accompanied everything done or said on the stage, a shower of oyster cans and vegetables fell around "Professor" Jenkins, but with it was a bouquet of artificial flowers, obtained from the village milliner for the occasion. Here was the tribute of the local populace to his accomplishment, and with a low bow Jenkins stepped forward to receive it. But the rubber string attached to it got into action at this time and the bouquet sailed over the heads of the audience to the back part of the room.

Sammy found a corn knife and threatened 'Squire Park, the village factotum, for neglect of duty. The 'Squire commanded peace, but the virgin dove was evidently roosting with clipped wings at some distance from the school house. "Mose," who had been attending to the work of checking up the cash, appeared at about this time, to reinforce his beleaguered partner, and by persuasion, argument and threats they finished the entertainment. The entire audience offered to escort "Ves" home after the show, but he held them all off by indiscriminate flourishing of the old pistol, taking time, however, to remark:

"The d-d-difference b-b-between m-me and you f-f-fell-lows is that I'm a f-f-f-fool for m-m-money, and y-y-you're a s-s-set of damned f-f-f-fools for n-n-nothing, and y-y-you ain't g-g-got you're m-m-money's w-w-w-orth. I'm taking along f-f-f-forty dollars and over of y-y-y-your money, and y-y-you ain't e-e-even had a g-g-good time."

"The trouble was," remarked Bascom Clarke to him, in an attempt to smooth his ruffled spirit, "the trouble was

you made too quick a change from 'Ves' Jenkins to 'Professor' Jenkins for the dull minds of the town folks to appreciate it. You should 'a' gone away and stayed long enough for the people to forget you, then come and rung the front door bell of the village after havin' licked the world into eatin' out of your hand, and they'd worship you as a little tin god. If you try to make good in a new fangled way in your home town you are bound to be hazed. But forty dollars worth of shinplasters ought to be mighty good healin' for a damaged 'artistic temperament,' if that's what you call it. Tell you what, 'Ves,' while they've heaped a pile of ridicule on you, and threw a few bits of offensive bric-a-brac, deep down in their gizzards they're admirin' your pluck and wishing they could do the turn half as well. More'n fifty per cent of the clubs a feller's hit with are envy, anyhow."

"B-b-b-but it's darn h-h-hard, Doc, to work l-l-l-like the old H-h-h-h-h-harry to g-g-g-et up something g-g-good and be t-t-t-treated like a d-d-dog," protested the professor.

"That's because the show was all right, 'Ves.' If you wasn't doin' all right they'd a just pitied you and went home without saying anything. Nobody threw any stones at St. Stephen till he was makin' good."

"And y-y-you think I-I-I-I was m-m-m-makin' good?"

"You sure were, 'Ves.' And I'm probably responsible for the whole row. We fellows that knew you best planned to have a little fun, like the bouquet stunt and things like that, and it turned into a riot. It just goes to show that you'd better not start a fire in the open unless the children are herded."

With his injured feelings relieved by this lingual oil applied by "Doc" Clarke, "Professor" Jenkins departed for home with his dignity and calm restored.

But his troubles were not at an end, for he had yet to go through the fiery furnace of matrimony. Having been an enthusiastic participant himself in more than one charivari party he knew what to expect, and so when he contemplated entering the marital state he did not presume on immunity from a "serenade."

From Jenkins' actions more than from his words his girl up the country gathered that he wanted to marry her. At the end of his choking, gasping, spluttering speech in which he conveyed, or sought to convey, his suggested nuptial arrangement, and after she had said, "Oh, Ves, this is so sudden," and cried a little on his shirt front, it was noticed that he seemed to have considerable more exuberance of spirit than before. He greased his boots with more care and greater frequency, wore his ancient "stove-pipe" hat on the side of his head, tilted his Wheeling stogie in the side of his mouth at an angle of forty-five degrees, and drove his mule through the streets of the town with an air of supreme importance. As the girl lived some distance up the country the news of his courtship had not reached town, though his frequent absences from the village on Sundays ought to have raised suspicion. However, his conduct was so indicative of his frame of mind that on the general symptoms he was finally charged with contemplating matrimony. With much surprise he asked:

"H-h-h-how'd you g-g-g-guess it?"

The wedding day arrived, and at 7 o'clock in the evening 'Squire Park pronounced the words which made the twain man and wife. As was the custom everybody present was privileged to kiss the bride, and in the confusion it was some time before Jenkins discovered that the procession was an endless chain and that the young swains of the village were then on their fourth round of osculatory greetings. Here is where he balked and the line was broken. As the boys departed they took occasion to advise Ves that they would see him later.

"No, you w-w-w-won't. T-t-t-there ain't no use of y-y-y-your trying the 'shiveree' game on us. It's n-n-n-no go."

It was like an invitation to come and make the night hideous, and preparations were made accordingly. A "horse-fiddle" was constructed. A "horse-fiddle" or "dumb-bull" is made by taking a dry-goods box of ample dimensions, boring an auger-hole in opposite sides,

through which a well rosined raw-hide is drawn. The resultant sound would do credit to the demoniacal groans of the inhabitants of Hades. This, with some tin horns, half a dozen farm bells borrowed from the hardware store, a bass-drum, cow-bells and a number of double-barrelled shot guns made up the outfit of noise producers. Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins, Junior, were temporarily quartered in the log home of Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins, Senior, whither the party proceeded. The ball opened with a volley from the guns, followed by a general fusilade of incongruous sound, supported by the bass-drum and grunts of the "horse-fiddle."

"Pa" Jenkins came out and ordered them all off the premises, at the same time letting loose two savage dogs with a "Sic 'em!" to stimulate their attack. A volley from the shot guns and a yell from the attacking party caused the dogs to lose heart. They turned tail and ran. Still the besieged party held out. The din was renewed. Mother Jenkins, with a fire poker charged the tormentors single-handed, and they retired to a safe distance until she returned to the house, when the attack was renewed with redoubled vigor.

The house still refused to capitulate, although all well knew the terms by which they could secure peace. It was the unwritten law that any kind of treat given would result in immediate cessation of hostilities. Having failed by the ordinary methods to secure a reduction of the fortress, the extreme measures were resorted to, which consisted in hoisting a fellow to the roof, armed with a big gunnysack. This he proceeded to stuff into the top of the chimney and the smoke from the fire poured into the house. The doors were opened and the windows, but there was no living in the atmosphere. Mother Jenkins, at the earnest solicitation of the bride and groom, brought out a half-bushel of grindstone apples, and Ves escorted the party to the village for further refreshments. The plug was removed from the chimney and quietness reigned. When young Jenkins arrived back home he found a fifty dollar bedroom suite as a present from the boys. It had

been brought in and set up during his absence. He looked at it in surprised pleasure, then turned to his late tormentors and said:

“Durn your f-f-f-fool souls. Y-y-y-you always end up a-a-a-all right. I g-g-guess you’re t-t-t-tryin’ to imitate the A-a-almighty, where the Bible says, ‘Whom the L-lord l-l-loveth he c-c-c-c-chaseneth.’”

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was four years after his arrival in Colfax before Clarke was able to get any information from his people in the south or let them know he was alive. He mailed letter after letter, composed at great trouble, owing to his meager education, and addressed them to Mt. Adams, Crockett's Bluff and other places where he thought they might be found. This was before the reconstruction and re-establishment of postoffices in any but the most important places. Finally, a letter addressed to his brother at Crockett's Bluff attracted the attention of the postmaster, who, seeing the postmark of an Indiana town, and recalling the fact that the refugee boy had gone north on a transport with Indiana troops, made the delivery of the letter possible.

And thus, like a voice from the grave, there came to them the knowledge that Bascom lived. They had given him up as lost to them forever. A letter was sent to him urging him to come back, and when he received it his heart strings were pulled in the direction of the old home. But he could see no hope of a future there, and made up his mind to fight out the battle in the place where God had planted his feet at the end of the long journey of misfortune and privation. His brother had served in the Confederate army, and afterwards died from diseases contracted during the struggle. His sisters married and were busy with their homes and families. Though he kept in constant correspondence with them he was not privileged to see them until fourteen years after he had left Arkansas.

With his wife and little boy he then accompanied the Indiana Editorial Association on its annual junket, which included Arkansas. He left the party at Little Rock and went down the White River to his people. No pen is

needed to record that reunion. The conjuring forces of the imagination can paint the picture better than it can be described, as the sisters, weeping with happiness, clasped their arms around his neck and looked into his eyes.

When he told his story and showed how he had found friends in his new home, and how he had been enabled to make a place for himself, he said :

“I went up there, hating the north and despising the people as cruel monsters, for so the picture had been painted to me as a boy. I found a flowing bowl of love and kindness. I was taken up there practically a slave in the hands of a cruel southerner. I was freed and given a home by one of the ‘monsters’ who had been putting in his best licks helping to save the Union. Women, the mothers and wives of these hated people, were mothers to me, and in the hours of my desolation gave me that sweet sympathy which made it possible to bear my burdens. Men, who were derided, scoffed at and ridiculed by my people of the south, gave me their hands and their friendship, and never once have I heard them refer to me or my people as not entitled to the utmost consideration. Talk about ‘southern hospitality,’ I’ll match you act for act, person for person, unselfishness for unselfishness with my friends in the north. Maybe God transplanted me that I might come back and testify to the fact that we are one people.”

“But, Bascom, don’t talk politics down here. The people are smarting over the results of the war, and there is much bitterness yet.”

Thus spoke one sister, fearful that an avalanche of his enthusiastic sentiment might cause trouble.

“Don’t you worry, Lucy. I’m here to visit friends, not to talk politics, but if any one shall ask me for information concerning the feeling in the north I shall tell them the truth. How else are they to be advised? Complete peace will never come until these people north and south get to know each other better. If I should come south and keep my mouth shut as to the character of the

people who gave me their friendship, I should be disloyal to them and to the honored name I bear. No Clarke was ever afraid to speak the truth or defend a friend. The northern people have been my friends and proved their right to the title. Why should I be dishonest with myself or my people by remaining silent as to their virtues? The men in the south who fought the battles of the Confederacy don't want me to. The fellows, on either side of the conflict, who did the fighting won't cause much trouble. The mouth-fighters, the 'bread and butter soldiers,' are having their time now and I understand the Ku-Klux still exists. These people belong to the same gang as the Knights of the Golden Circle in the north, commonly called "Copperheads," whose business it was to stab the fighting men in the back. Both these kinds of people are not worthy of consideration and ought to be shaken up in a common pot and boiled in carbolic acid to prevent their contaminating decent society, and then dumped in the garbage heap."

And he went freely about among his old neighbors, those who scarcely remembered him as a boy, but who knew the family and were cognizant of its former status.

"What do they think about the war up there?" asked Captain Halla, an old friend of his father.

"Why, you seldom hear anything about it. The war's over in the north."

"I suppose they'd make it pretty hot for a southe'ner, if he ventured up thah."

"Hot for him! Why, man, I told you that the war's over up there, and they don't make any distinction between northerner and southerner. I ought to know, for I'm a southerner and I've lived among 'em for fourteen years."

"Yes, but you was young and didn't have no hand in the fight."

"Well, take Jim Dykes, then. Jim surely could be charged with fighting them, for he was taken prisoner in a battle and was kept at Fort Delaware till freed after the war ended. He didn't come south again, but stayed there

and hired out as a farm hand. It is true that some of the non-combatants at first called him a "rebel," but the people themselves hushed 'em up mighty quick, and treated him right. He married one of Old Man Smith's daughters—the family I went north with, remember—and did well. He and his family were honored in the community. I could name you hundreds of others. And I know of Union men who have made their homes in the south and who are respected and contented. Men hunting for trouble can find it on either side of Mason & Dixon's line, but an American who totes square will find a welcome anywhere in any section of the Union

"By the way," continued Clarke, "Old Man Smith came back to Arkansas after the war was over. What became of him?"

"Oh, he hung around here awhile damning the Yankees and telling blood-curdling stories of their treatment of him, and finally died. They buried him up the country somewhere, and I don't believe anybody could find the grave if they wanted to."

"Well, there's a fair sample, Captain. Smith was taken up north because he represented himself to be a Union man pestered and threatened by the southerners. This government he spent so much time and energy damning gave him free transportation and rations to a place of safety. The people up there gave him work and helped him, only to be rewarded by his disloyalty. He consorted with the 'Copperheads' and abused those who had befriended him. His family was different. The girls and the boys found themselves homes, and the sons-in-law were industrious, hard-working men. The old man's characteristics were not approved by them, neither did they believe his treatment of me was right. I don't hold up anything against him, notwithstanding he led me a pretty tough life, but he did the same with his own family, and we'll let it go as his way. The girls, and especially the oldest one, Tiney, were good to me in their way and the boys accepted me as one of themselves. The old man was stubborn, and his life as a slave driver in North

Carolina hadn't helped him to a genial disposition. He drove his own family in much the same manner as he drove the blacks. But I can't forget the fact that it was he who made it possible for me to get north and 'find myself,' as the saying is. I've forgotten his roughness and abuse because of that one act."

"I've been watching your language, boy, and you-all don't talk like a southe'ner. I guess the weanin' process was pretty complete."

"If I've changed it's through no attempt on the part of the people up there to make me change. They haven't poked fun at me, nor thrown my style of talk at me. I guess I've just absorbed it. I've studied and worked to make something out of myself that would be a credit to my people. I had a good father and mother, as you well know, and the great regret in my home-coming is the fact of the graves over there on the hill. I wish I could see and talk to my mother, that she might know that I have been true to the teachings she and father gave me in my boyhood."

"They were good people, boy, and your father was my best friend."

"I'm glad to hear you say it, sir, and you may rest assured a friend of my father is a friend of mine."

Thus he went, visiting the old scenes and talking with the people, fearlessly discussing the war and its results, and spreading the gospel of a re-united nation of one people under one flag. When he left he received evidences of good will and a hearty God-speed.

He missed his brother Will, for he had wanted to discuss with him the new relationship between the north and the south. The brother had gone to his reward with the feeling that the south was eternally right and the north eternally wrong. He had refused to come north on a visit to his brother, and the tone of his letter had indicated that he at least was un-reconstructed. The bitterness of defeat was in his soul, and he refused to be reconciled. He had refused to go north, and Bascom was too poor to come south, and they had never had the

opportunity to talk it over, brother to brother. This shadow was perpetually on him during his stay.

"Poor Will," Bascom said to his sister Mary. "He didn't have a chance to realize what the north had done for me, or he would have felt differently. Gratitude would have welled up in his heart, for whatever was done for me was done for him. He never knew how I worshipped him as my big brother, and I never had the opportunity to tell him."

"Oh, yes, he knew," responded the sister. "He wanted to see you-all befo' he died, and he talked about you continually after we got that letter from you. But he just couldn't bring hi'self to make the journey. I think he would have buried his pride and gone, afterwards, but his health was such that he dare not undertake it. He was broken down and discouraged with the wreck of things in the south, and he hadn't the strength to take up the ha'd fight which would be necessary to build anew. You couldn't be here to know and realize what we had to go through. The war had ruined us, and we hadn't anything to begin life with again. The niggers were arrogant and independent, and practically useless from the standpoint of labor. They rode over us all, and made it well-nigh unendurable. The plantations were neglected or at best poo'ly cultivated. There was no money, except the worthless Confederate scrip. Wretchedness was on every hand. The sick and crippled soldiers of the Confederacy had no one to take care of them except their neighbors and friends. There was no powerful government to put them in hospitals or give them a pension. The state treasury was empty. All had been spent on a lost cause. I tell you, Bascom, you don't know what it is to have staked your last dollar on what you believed to be your bounden duty, and then have to view the wreckage of your hopes with an empty pocket. If the no'thern people have one ounce of pity, just a glimpse at our sufferings would touch them. We're placed in the hands of an ignorant, incapable race, and we are asked to submit in patience to the outrages they perpetrate.

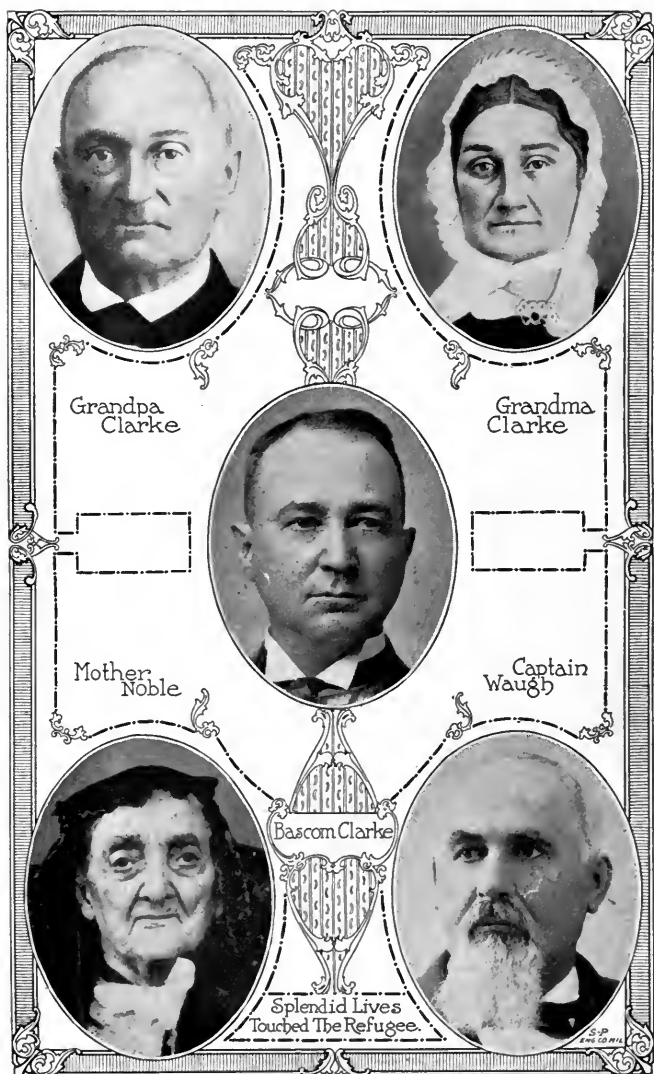
No no'therner would stand for it any more than a southe'-ner, if the conditions were reversed. I thank God you were out of it all. It was the answer to my prayers for your safety, night after night, when I did not know where you were. It was the only comfort I had. I could go to God and tell Him my troubles, and He comforted me, or I couldn't have stood it."

"You have been a loyal sister to me, Mollie, and God has been good to me. Your prayers have been answered, or I wouldn't be here with you. You have been through your Gethsemane and you are still here. The message of confidence I have brought to the stricken south, from the victors, has been delivered, and I'll return with a prayer for patience and consideration on the part of the north toward my people, the vanquished. Let us hope that the time will come when both sections will know each other better."

"You won't always stay away from us, will you, brother?"

"No, I'm the head of the Clarke clan, you know, by direct line of succession, and it wouldn't do for me to neglect my people, would it?" he answered, playfully.

"Yes, thank God, you're a Clarke," she answered.



NOTE.—“Mother” Noble was 92 years old at the time this picture was taken, in 1911, a year before her death.



CHAPTER XXIV.

"Say, boys, it's about time Doc Clarke reported on the state of the Union, ain't it? He's been down among the Johnnies in Arkansaw, and ought to have first hand information."

Thus Dan White opened the meeting of the town philosophers' club in the drug store, a short time after the postmaster's return.

"He don't know nothin' about the state of the Union," said Dave Ball. "He went down to put some flowers on Old Man Smith's grave."

When the laughter had subsided, following this observation, Freeman Teguarden spoke up:

"Naw, you fellers don't know him. He went down to show the baby to his folks. They ain't no man'll travel further or endure more than the man with his first baby what his folks haven't seen. We've heerd everythin' about that baby, from the length o' time the doctor was to his house when it was born to the last dido it cut up, and he began to see that his audience was losin' interest."

"W-w-w-well, a f-f-fel-l-ler that ain't g-g-got any p-p-p-pride in his c-c-c-child-d-dren oughtn't t-t-t-t-to h-h-have any," said "Ves" Jenkins.

"There speaks the fond parent," observed Doctor Parker. "He's got one up to his house, you know."

"Know!" ejaculated 'Squire Parks. "Know! Ves was in my hotel tellin' about it before they got the kid washed."

"They tell me," said Clarke, addressing himself to the 'Squire, "They tell me the town marshal had to hold you to keep you from ringing the school bell like there was a fire when your first baby was born."

A roar of laughter greeted this unexpected shot, and Parks laughed as heartily as any of the others.

"Well, I suppose I was as big a darn fool as any of the others. When the woman you love goes up the shore of the dark river and comes back to you with your own baby in her arms a man ain't to blame for indulgin' in a little celebration."

"Yes, but from the way he carries on you wouldn't think he gave his wife much credit. He goes around with his head up in the air as if sayin': 'See what I've done!'" chimed in "Bob" Clark.

Just then there came an interruption. A young, slim, boyish looking fellow rushed in, in evident excitement. It proved to be Henry Raines, son-in-law to Benedict Moore, the saloon-keeper.

"I want the marshal!" he exclaimed.

"What's up?" asked the postmaster.

"Old Moore's got my wife and baby locked up over to his house and won't let them out."

Several of the men sprang to their feet with a declaration that they'd make short work of the rascal, but they were stayed by cooler heads. They located Perry Rowdyhouse, the marshal, and hastily summoned him.

"Tell us about it," said Perry, "so we can get the right of it."

"Moore was married before and his first wife was a good woman, too good for the likes of him. They had a girl baby, and in spite of Moore's dirty ways the mother brought the girl up right. There ain't no better woman in the world than my wife. After the girl's mother died Moore married this helion, and they wan't never no peace for her arter that. They ain't either one on 'em fitten to have the care of a pig, to say nothin' of a sweet little girl. They certainly didn't set no example fer her to go by, but her mother's teachin's and examples stuck by her, and she came through true and clean. I got her away from 'em and married her. They made a racket about it, but they couldn't do nothin'. Then the baby came, and they got cute. They began to give my wife soft stuff and

told her they wanted to do somethin' for the baby, and got the girl to go over there with their mush talk. Soon as ever they got her there they locked the door on her and the baby, and won't let her come out to me, or me go to see 'em. I've gone up there and demanded that they let her out, and they've only laughed at me and cussed me for my pains. They told me to keep off the premises or they'd shoot me for trespass. I ain't afeared o' their shootin' me, and I'd fight the two of 'em, if I wasn't afraid they'd kill the girl and the baby, and the girl ain't in no condition yet to stand a row. They must be some way fer me to git the girl and the baby, and I thought the marshal could help me."

"We'll all help," declared the postmaster. "I'll go over with you and help you get 'em."

"You bet! We all will."

"Now," said the marshal, "Let's not get hotheaded. When I was in the army we never got nowhere without lookin' the situation over. If there's any shootin' to be done at anybody it's my business to be shot at. That's what I'm hired for. The first thing we want is the papers, and the 'Squire can get them out right away, and we'll go up there in the name of the law. If you fellers want to come along we'll swear ye in. You, Doc, I want, 'cause somebody's got to help the kid take care of the girl and the baby, anyway. When I was in the war we always looked out for the wimmen and children, and we'll look out for 'em proper this time."

"Don't stop to parley too long with the brute, Perry," said Bascom. "He ain't worth bandying language with."

"We won't talk any longer than's necessary, Doc, but we don't want to have to kill the pup till we have to, even if we think the community would be able to part with him without cavin' in its moral standin'."

"All right, Perry, you talk to him, and while you're talkin' I'll draw a bead on him to prepare for emergencies. Then we'll know there won't be any bloodshed that'll worry anybody! Don't you worry a second, old man, and you won't have to look around to see if I'm

here. When it comes to fightin' fer the women and children the Johnnie will be in hailing distance of the Yank all the time."

When the 'Squire made out the proper papers the marshal went up to the house backed by a small army. Right by the side of the marshal was Clarke and the aggrieved husband, who refused to stay in the background.

"If anybody's to get hurt in this thing I'm the feller that the hurtin' belongs to by right," he said.

"There isn't anybody going to get hurt," said Bascom, reassuringly. "The best way to prevent it is to prevent it. And I don't believe Moore will care about taking a look at the other side of the river just this minute, and he's the only one in danger of getting hurt, or Bob Crockett didn't teach me to shoot."

"What's all this row about?" demanded Moore, appearing in answer to the marshal's summons.

"I have a writ here requiring you to deliver over to me this instant this boy's wife and baby," said Perry.

"You go to hell!" answered the obstinate brute.

"I ain't got time to talk, Dick, and this writ says 'forthwith.' That means that the state of Indiana wants it done now, so you'd better not stand on the order of your goin', but produce the folks called for right now."

"You'll not get 'em, and you'll get off my premises. I'll shoot the first man who crosses this threshold."

"No you won't, Dick," chimed in Clarke. "I've got you covered now as deputy marshal, and the first false move you make I'll pull the trigger. Go ahead, Perry!"

"Drop that gun and throw up your hands!" said the marshal.

For just an instant Moore looked at the situation and then surrendered. The marshal put the irons on him and Clarke, followed by the husband, pushed up the stairs. The old woman was on guard there, brandishing a revolver and hurling vile language at the invaders. Before she had a chance to use the weapon she was disarmed and turned over to the marshal, who had by this time reached the upper landing. She bit, kicked and

scratched with all the abandon of a woman of her kind, but was finally subdued. On her refusal to give up the key to the room in which the wife was locked, Clarke, with a few well-directed applications of his boot, kicked it in. He and the husband then carried the girl and her baby out past the sullen, defeated abductors, whence they were taken to their home. In the happiness of their reunion they begged the officer to release the couple and not prosecute them further. Perry, therefore, after possessing himself of the revolvers, took off the handcuffs.

"This isn't the end of this," declared Moore, as he rubbed his wrists where the irons had chafed him.

"No," said Doctor Parker, sententiously, "it's not the end. We have the goods on you, now, and unless you and that woman get out of this town your case will go to the next grand jury for abduction, and we'll see that you both spend a fair share of your life where the dogs won't bite you. So, make up your minds to get out. You'll be watched night and day from this time on till you go, and the first false move will cost you dearly. I'm speaking by the card, Moore, and you'd better take my advice and leave right soon. It'll be healthier for you somewhere else."

The philosophers' club returned to the postoffice, minus Rowdyhouse, who had the matter of some torn clothes and scratches to attend to.

"Let's see, where did we leave off," said Clarke. "We were paying tribute to wives, weren't we?"

"Some wives," said Sam Sering.

"Most wives," interposed Dan White.

"Oh, don't let's count that Moore woman at all," said the postmaster. "She's an exception and just what you'd expect to find with such a man as Moore."

"But his first wife was all right, wasn't she?" said Teeguarden.

"Yes, and Bill may have been all right when he married her, so far as she could see. He was putting his best front to her, and it might have been a decent looking outside. I guess most of the women find the husbands aren't

the fellows they thought they married. Take Mrs. Clarke, for instance: she didn't realize how much of 'worse' it might be when she took me for better or for worse, but she's been too proud to admit to anybody but herself that she'd made a mistake. So she tolerates me around."

"She's been the makin' of you, Doc," said Bob Clark. "Lots of us didn't know but she was makin' a mistake when she hitched up with you, much as we liked you."

"Say, it did take some nerve for a woman to consent to share my five dollars a week and no prospects, didn't it? But I haven't heard her complain about it yet, and I sure have been happy. It was worth all I went through to get her. I've noticed that God usually makes up to you for the sufferin' the devil puts you to, and his Satanic Majesty certainly did have me on the hip for a time, if he was responsible for the things that came my way."

"Don't forget," said Teeguarden, "that your mother was probably watching you all the time."

"Yes, I know what you believe, Freeman," said Bascom. "And if she were watching me she must have been with me when I stood by her grave the other day down in Arkansas, with my wife and my baby. I knelt down there and cried to her. I couldn't help it. I'd done it if the whole world was there. She had a hard, hard pathway in life and I wasn't old enough to realize it until she was dead and it was too late. I wanted her to see my wife and my baby boy."

"She's probably been granted that privilege long before this," said Teeguarden, firm in his spiritualistic belief.

"Whether she has or not I don't know, but I'm trying to be as good to my wife as my father was to his. I can just begin to understand now what a man and woman they were. It doesn't do any good to speculate on what might have been. But I would have liked to see them live to a ripe old age like Grandfather and Grandmother."

"If they had you wouldn't be here," said Bob Clark.

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," concluded Bascom.

Captain Waugh came through the door just at this time, and after acknowledging the greetings, turned to Clarke.

"Well, son," he asked, "Did you get your money's worth on the trip?"

"Considering that it didn't cost me much it wouldn't take much to reimburse me so far as that is concerned," responded the postmaster. "But I got what money won't buy, a loving greeting from my people. You can't buy folks, Captain, and to put my arms around my sisters and look into their faces after all these years was worth walking all the way. Thanks to the "editorial courtesies" extended by the railroad companies I didn't have to walk, however, and the trip did me a world of good."

"You didn't want to stay, eh?"

"No! From my manner of coming up here it looked as if the Lord didn't intend me to cast my lot down there, and I think I'll follow the lead given me. You'll have to put up with me awhile longer, I guess."

"How'd you manage to reconcile them to your northern ideas?"

"I didn't try to reconcile them in the way you mean. They know I love the south and its people—that it's my homeland and my people. So I talked to them as brother to brother in reason, and they listened, better probably than they would have listened to a Northerner. But they have their problems, and it wrung my heart to realize what they have gone through. It was a wicked, unnecessary war, Captain, and the innocent ones carried most of its burdens. They haven't recovered from the shock or the humiliation of defeat, yet, and they won't for a long time to come. Many mistakes were made in the reconstruction program. Let us admit, if need be, that the mistakes were due to the fact that some of their leaders were bull-headed. The application of the iron hand did not tend to break their spirit, but to arouse sullen defiance. The choice of men sent down there, "carpet-baggers," they call them, was not always the wisest,

and the result was just what could be imagined. I firmly believe that if Lincoln had been permitted to live he would have gone at it differently. He would have gone in the spirit of love and helpfulness, and with prayers to God to guide his hands. Riding rough-shod over a people may conquer them physically, but it breeds hate. Then, the putting of the responsibility of government in the hands of the niggers, who are not by nature, training or heritage equipped for such a job, hasn't helped to untangle the mess. I'm glad Grant has been in the presidential chair. He has treated them with respect, as our countrymen,—mistaken, if that be the word to use, but entitled to treatment as Americans. Of course they can't see his great personality now, because of the blood of their wounds which fills their eyes. But he understands and measures the situation with his broad mind better than any other one at Washington. It will be a long time, many years probably, before the south can look at the north with any degree of tolerance, but the victors can afford to be magnanimous and patient."

"Well, they have my sympathy," remarked Hayden, one of the proprietors of the drug store, who had been listening to the conversation.

"They've got to have something more than sympathy," responded Clarke. "I remember when we refugee 'Johnnies' were coming north, poverty stricken and miserable. We had to wait in Mattoon, Illinois, for the train to be made up for us to come to Indianapolis. The people gathered around and expressed sympathy for our forlorn appearance. Finally, one spoke up: 'I've heard you people tell how much you sympathize with these folks. I sympathize with them to the extent of giving this much toward getting them something to eat. They're hungry.' And he shoved over a fifty-cent shinplaster. Others followed his example and we were fed. That's genuine sympathy. The south is impoverished. It hadn't a dollar in capital on which to start, when the war was ended, and desolation was all around them. When the north gets to taking its money down there and helping to rejuvenate

the country it will be practical sympathy. And besides it will be the best paying proposition from a financial standpoint that could be made. The south is wealthy in natural resources, but it needs help. It is just scratching the ground and practicing enforced economy until it gets on its feet again. It can't be reconstructed into the part it ought to play in the economy of the nation in a day or a year or a decade. The people have got to learn new habits of life, and old prejudices will have to give way. My heart is with them and my love goes out to them in their struggle."

CHAPTER XXV.

"Two things in Arkansaw have proved valuable lessons to me, the jay-bird mill and the razor-back hog. In fact I can lay my ambition to observations of the one and my resourcefulness to a contemplation of the other."

Thus spoke the postmaster.

"What's a jay-bird mill?" came in a chorus from his fellow members of the town philosopher club.

"A jay-bird mill! You don't mean to tell me that you fellows have lived all these years and not discovered what a jay-bird mill is! There's a lot of men in this town running jay-bird mills right now. In fact, I'm somewhat afraid I'm running one to some extent myself, but the razor-back hog is going to pull me out of it."

"Great Scott! Don't talk in riddles," said Dan White. "I'll bite! Tell us about this jay-bird mill."

"While I was in Arkansaw during the war, rations were mighty scarce, and I used to have to go to mill seven miles away once a week with a bag of corn to be ground. The mill was a little one for a cent, with a capacity of only a few bushels a day. The hopper and stone were in the upper part of a cotton gin, and the power was furnished by four mules on the ground floor, and they had to be argued with all the time to get any speed out of them at all. When running full capacity the stream of meal would only be about as big as a lead pencil. Well, one day, after filling the hopper the miller went down stairs to chase the mules around, at the same time keeping his eye on the spout leading into the bag. Much to his surprise, though he heard the hum of the burrs, there wasn't any resulting golden meal. Wondering at this he investigated and found that an enterprising jay-bird, in quest of food for the family he had taken upon himself to provide for, had stationed himself where the corn

bumped down the spout from the hopper, had wig-wagged home for Mrs. Jay and there they were catching the kernals on the fly as fast as they came along. A dinky mill that a jaybird could starve wouldn't go very far toward making a man a living, would it?"

"Well, let's have the answer," persisted White.

"The answer is that I want a bigger mill."

"You're doin' well enough now, ain't ye?" said Tee-guarden.

"I'm doin' the capacity of the mill, that's all, and the mill isn't big enough."

"Do you mean the town's too small for you?" queried Bill Clark, who happened to be Clarke's brother-in-law.

"No, sir, the town's all right, and the people are all right, but the territory's too small."

"What you goin' to do, put an addition to the town?" said Bob Clark.

"No, I'm going to follow the example of that greatly abused, but industrious animal, the razor-back hog of Arkansaw, and no history of life in that state before the war would be complete without at least a passing reference to him. Self-reliant, wise beyond his day and generation, free from any kind of restraint, he foraged for his own provender and seldom went hungry. Down on the river bottom his long snout, backed by a strength and intelligence his more pampered brethern never possessed, would search out and find the daintiest roots and herbs upon which to feast. Used to taking care of himself he was quick to scent danger, would follow his first instinct and run to escape trouble, but would fight and fight hard if cornered. In more than one contest with the hound dogs the latter were taught to have a wholesome respect for the dignity and rights of the former.

"Each owner had a mark which was registered at the county seat, and severe punishment was in store for anyone who appropriated to his own use one of these roving swine that belonged to another. In the fall the owners were supposed to kill in proportion to their original droves, as the increase was rarely caught and branded.

Of course some killed over and some under their proportionate share, but there were plenty of hogs for all, and it made no difference. Later when the war came with its privations these hogs were much sought, for food was scarce.

"Some of the old darkies were privileged to raise some hogs and chickens of their own, and the money from them they were allowed to keep. Invariably they brought their products to 'Marse Jeems,' as they called Colonel Clarke, my father. Sometimes they 'lifted' a shoat from their master's drove, and cooked it after night. When the war was on and the strings tightened about the slaves, so that their privileges were practically all taken away, including the right of ownership in their own hogs, they were compelled to dispose of even their own product under cover.

"Squire Walker's 'Uncle Tom,' one night, aroused father from his sleep about midnight:

" 'Marse Jeems,' he said, 'Get up. I wants to see you-all.'

"He had a nice fat shoat in his possession, which had been killed and dressed.

" 'Marse Jeems,' he said, 'I done killed one o' you-all shoats down on the bottom. Ah knowed you-all didn't had time to chase youah hawgs, an' I 'lowed I'd git him foh yuh. Ah know you-all mahk, kase hits a crop off'en one ear an' a swallow fork in de lef.'

" 'Marse Jeems' gave Uncle Tom a plug of tobacco and twenty dollars in Confederate money for butchering the pig, but it was noted afterwards that the old darkey had been careful to leave the ears with the trimmings, so that the Colonel was always somewhat in doubt as to having his own pig.

"We were privileged to have one meal off that shoat, and one only. A party of Confederate soldiers, retreating through the town the next day, conscripted the remainder, and the family returned to short rations.,

"Just before the blockade of the White River, an up-bound packet fleeing the Yankee gunboats, to lighten

itself dumped three hundred barrels of molasses on the Mount Adams landing. It laid there for months unclaimed until quite a number of the barrels were appropriated to the use of the inhabitants of the village. The remainder were scrutinized by the hogs, and as the weather came to their assistance, opening a seam here and there, the wary animals used their snouts and feet to advantage until they had the barrels open and the liquid sweetness pouring in a flood upon the ground. Then high carnival reigned. They would fill themselves with the molasses, go down to the river and take in copious drafts of water, then return for more molasses, repeating the operation until they had reached the utmost limits of their capacity. Soon not a vestige remained of the jettisoned cargo, and the hogs returned to their usual mode of getting a living.

"The lineal descendants of these hogs still remain in Arkansas, but their environment has been changed. They are long-nosed and gaunt, but the price of pork has gone up and up until 'pigs is pigs.' They receive care and attention their forefathers never dreamed of. As a result they are not quite as resourceful, and depend more on their human owners for the necessary sustenance. The owners, in turn, recognizing their commercial value, are more anxious to have them fat and in good condition when butchering time comes. The stories of the old life before the war, handed down from father to son in hogdom, must have thrilled the hearts of the piglets and made them yearn for the 'good old days.'"

"Well," persisted Bill Clark, "as aforesaid, what's the answer?"

"I've been doing some collecting for a farm machinery company down in Ohio, and they want me to go with them regularly. Of course I might put it the other way around, and say that I hired myself out to them in about the same way I 'accepted' a position in John Ghent's drug store, and you all know how I did that. And it's going to be a case of 'root hog, or die!' I've got to the end of the string in the way of possible income from my business

here in Colfax, and I've got to widen out or be content to make a bare living."

"S'posin' you fail?" said Teeguarden.

"I'll begin over again. A man that can't be down and out and bob up smiling for a new start isn't worth much."

"What's all this g-g-got to do with the r-r-r-razor-back h-h-h-hog?" suggested Ves Jenkins.

"Why, they trapse around the whole darn country to make their living, but the pork barrel is in the home town. Do you get me?"

"We'll do our level best to get whatever you've got. Bring lots of it for we've been feedin' you for a long time," said Hayden.

"Who's going to run the Chronicle?"

"Who's goin' to be postmaster?"

The questions were shot at him from all sides, but Clarke told them Gil Hamilton would be over to take care of the Chronicle and the United States government would probably be able to find a successor without knocking at many doors.

Bascom had been the local representative of a collection agency. He had demonstrated his ability in the direction of teasing the reluctant dollars from the pockets of the slow-payers to such an extent that he had attracted the notice of one of the important concerns dealing in threshing machinery. A particularly hard collection, in which the machinery on which the company had a lien had been moved to another state, was made by him. He proved to himself also that he could handle business, and this gave him confidence to believe that he could safely enlarge his field of labor. To do it, however, he had to burn a good many bridges behind him, but he did it with faith that wherever the road led he would find success at the end.

In the long consultation with his wife, before the move was made, she proved herself a helpmate indeed. She put her hand on his arm and looked into his face with a touch of the old sauciness, and said:

"We'll back you, honey, the babies and I, and I know

you'll win out. But don't forget when you burn your bridges that we've got to be on the same side of the stream with you when the bridge goes down."

"That's the only thing that's made me hesitate at all, Ma. But if you say 'Go!' I'll take the bit in my teeth and never even hesitate, not if the jockey falls off or the sulky smashes, till I'm under the wire. If some of these cusses had wives like mine they wouldn't be running jay-bird mills all their lives."

"Jay-bird mills! What do you mean?"

"Oh, I forgot! You belong to the great army of un-initiates, too, don't you? Well, I'll tell you what a jay-bird mill is."

Then he proceeded to explain and draw his conclusions.

"Well I don't care. Even if the miller's sack went empty the Jays had one good meal, didn't they?" was the wife's comment.

"I hadn't thought of that?" said Bascom.

Just then Bill Clark and his wife came in. The news of the contemplated move had been promptly conveyed home and Elizabeth Watkins Clark insisted on going to see what Belle thought of it. If anybody thought that the Watkins family had not been reconciled to the fellow that grabbed one of the principal members of the household and carried her off to his own cave, the greeting given by "Lib" to her brother-in-law would have set his mind at rest.

"I'm glad Belle had the spunk to stick to you, brother. She showed rare judgment on two special occasions—when she came into the Watkins family and when she went into the Clarke family. I glory in your grit and I'm proud to own you for kinfolk. You ain't afraid to let go your moorings because some ship has been wrecked on the high seas. You've been a good brother to us all and like the good generous boy you are you have forgiven the things said and done in the past. I have tried to make up to you for the rough road you had to travel at the outset and try to show you that I believe in you. I

think I can see what this means. Larger and still larger things will be trusted to you until you reach your rightful position. I'm glad sister Belle is your wife."

"So am I, Lib. Because if it were some women I might not have the courage to strike out."

"Oh, pshaw!" interposed Belle. "I can't see how any credit is due me for backing up my husband in trying to better himself. If a wife won't uphold the hands of her husband when he is fighting for a place in the world she doesn't deserve to have a husband. If he does me the honor to consult with me as a partner in the things that go to make up a man's work, the least I can do is to measure up my life beside him and, so far as I can, be what God intended a wife to be, a helpmeet."

"Yes," said Bill, "we were discussing the subject of wives this afternoon and the jury was unanimous."

"Unanimous as to what?" demanded Mrs. "Bill."

"The question's privileged, Bill. You don't have to answer," said Bascom.

"You mean," said Mrs. Bill, "he doesn't need to answer. I've heard men talk about their wives in public myself. You'd think they'd all married saintesses, and then if you'd follow them home you'd find 'em wondering what had become of all the money they left with 'em, doled out like they was givin' to the preacher. Partnership! Huh! Sometimes it's more like a man and a hired girl, only the wife doesn't get regular wages like the girl would."

"It isn't very often a 'silent partnership,' anyway, is it 'Lib'?" queried Bascom.

"No, and it shouldn't be. And if the men would listen a little more to what their wives say, and consult with them on their plans and ambitions, there wouldn't be so many men carping about their wives' extravagance, either."

"You and Belle ought to start a Society for the Betterment of the Treatment of Wives by their Husbands," said Bill.

"'Twouldn't be any use," said Belle. "You couldn't get a woman to acknowledge, outside the divorce court, that her husband wasn't a perfect angel. And the meeting would resolve itself into a Society for the Mutual Admiration of Our Husbands. No, we'll have to work out the problem, each in our own home and in our own way."

CONCLUSION.

Why go further? Is not the picture sufficient? The development of the fundamentals of character have been shown. The filing, furbishing, smoothing and trimming which came to Clarke as a machinery salesman and afterwards as publisher of *The American Thresherman* is a story in itself. In the perspective he now knows that the privations and struggles of boyhood and young manhood, bitter at the time, were the very things that conspired to develop strength, character and determination. He was undaunted by failure and unchanged in nature by success. Positive in his conviction he was just as positive in acknowledging an error. Having opinions, he was not opinionated. Firm in his beliefs, he was tolerant. From abuse he learned patience and endurance; by ridicule he was taught to correct his mistakes; by failure he found the pathway to success; knowing every step of the way from abject poverty to competency, his desire for companionship brought him friends all along the path. Thus he grew in strength and self-reliance and upon his shoulders leaned more than one he had found fainting and weary by the roadside.

From a busy and eventful life he gathered a store of information, to which he applied his own peculiar processes of reasoning and developed his own philosophy. For instance, at divers times he has given utterance to the following observations:

Don't expect too much before you deserve it. There's only one pearl in a car-load of mussel shells.

I have read in the Good Book, "Honor thy father," but I never found the page where it called him "My old man."

The boy who mows the lawn without being told, and who helps mother wash the dishes when she's tired, becomes the man the place seeks without the necessity of hiring a brass band.

Most of the skyscrapers in the city have farmer boys for tenants. When you do a good turn forget it, and some time way ahead, when you need it most and expect it least, your reward will be a hundredfold.

I believe in God's promises literally. I've put them to the test a thousand times and won the capital prize at every drawing.

Be truthful, not diplomatic. Diplomacy is a way nations have of lying to each other.

None of us believe in fortune telling, but the gypsies still get silver in their palms.

When a man does you a good turn pray for him, and also for several others just like him.

If you are caught in the wrong, take your medicine like a man instead of trying to blame it on others. I don't believe in even taking a licking by proxy.

If the north and south had only talked it over, as brother to brother, then held a few camp meetings and told the Lord about it, maybe they wouldn't have been so far apart. Look what a saving it would have been in monuments alone.

The fleet of boats I found on the lower Mississippi dredging for musselshells to sell to the Yankee button-makers, was worth more to both sides than a fleet of gunboats to either.

You don't get much advertisement out of your name on a graveyard rock.

The best liniment for stiff joints is kneeling down at night by yourself and whispering your thanks to Him who keeps the closest tabs on the orphan boy.

"If I were a boy again, just for tonight" and my neighbor was mean enough to guard his melon-patch with a gun, I think I'd expostulate with him.

There may be those who can get closer to God than a good Christian mother standin' up in meetin' proclaiming her articles of faith, but I doubt it.

As you go along life's pathway, plant a little flower here and there, in good deeds, and the fragrance wafted your way in the sundown of life will be the sweetest recollection of all.

If you can't pray yourself, help pay those who make it their business.

A man who will steal a bean from a two-cent jack-pot will stack the cards in a big game.

You'll find human nature averaging about the same the world over. The politicians who decry the "big interests" weren't in when the melon was cut. That's all.

It isn't always the glibbest tongue that means the most. I once committed sixty-five verses from the New Testament before breakfast one Sunday, and drew a prize for it; and then got scolded by Aunt Sally Kendall for fishing that very afternoon.

The only thing the two could agree on during the war was that "graybacks" were worse than "chiggers."

I never thought the Yankees were stingier than our folks until I tried to eat their hardtack and found how skimp they were with shortening.

A cross-eyed man and a "pepper-box" revolver are alike in one thing: Neither hits where it's looking.

I believe more in the Apostles' Creed than I do in living on corn bread.

I don't like nigger dogs, even in Uncle Tom's Cabin.

I don't want to stir up the past, but if I knew that Yank who bent my first single-barrel shotgun around a tree in '63 I'd make him read this book.

Reviewing his busy life with a friend, one day, he said: "Without the experiences of my early life I could not have succeeded in some of the fields in which I have labored. I was broken loose and cast adrift, and I had to take the initiative. Go to the village and see the crowds of young men standing around with their hands in their pockets watching the trains go by, and you will find an idle squad that can be duplicated in every village the country over. They would welcome an opportunity of doing something for themselves, yet don't know how or haven't the ambition to create opportunities. They stand there day after day wishing that fortune would favor them with an open avenue for them to become useful men. In the war of '61 to '65 instance after instance can be recalled where boys who were considered the village loafers, when given an opportunity to fight for their country, became the very pick of their regiments and the bravest of the brave. The war gave them an opportunity. The boy who has to fight his way against odds, or forge his way to the front against more than an even field is excusable for being timid about tackling the job. The trouble is there are not enough men ready to encourage boys to become useful men. What you get in this busy

world you have to fight for. The fact is it isn't worth much unless you have wrested it from the world after a struggle in which you are both gainers.

"When I applied for a local agency to sell farm machinery on commission the people smiled at the audacity of my thinking I could sell goods of that kind. But I worked, early and late. I called to my aid every resource of my experience. When the roads were too bad to drive I rode horseback, and when the horse couldn't get through I walked. The result was that the man who smiled the broadest at my application paid me more money than any other man in his employ because I sold the goods and collected the money for them. Thus, my years of handling machinery on the farm, and knowing the farmer's characteristics, my contact with these kind of people in the drug store and postoffice, and in publishing the village newspaper, and my life as a salesman, led me to believe I could run a farmers' magazine.

"I launched the enterprise against the advice of every business friend, and safely stored away are the discouraging letters which came as answers to mine setting forth my plans. In 1889 I had been broken down in health as the result of an attack of typhoid fever, and on the advice of the doctor tried a change in climate. The company for which I was working sent me to Wisconsin. Nine years later, on that memorable day in May when Dewey sank the fleet of Admiral Montejó in Manila Bay the first issue of *The American Thresherman* appeared. Upon its front page was a picture of the battleship *Indiana*. The magazine is running yet and its advertising accounts and subscription list are evidences that I was right. I've had all the discouragements in the category, in every enterprise in which I ventured, and sometimes the other fellow has licked me and licked me hard. But the contest, instead of putting me down and out, has only nerved me to come again.

"There are a whole lot of fellows giving you advice and holding up their hands to tell you 'not to do it,' when you plan to build in lines out of the common run,

and who are waiting around for a chance to say, 'I told you so,' if you fail. But these fellows only know 'six per cent and safe security,' and they never did a piece of original constructive economical work in their lives. If Columbus had had a chartered sea Isabella wouldn't have sold her finger rings to help him and you would never have heard of him. Of course he got shoved in the bastille and thought the world ungrateful, the same as some of the rest of us have been given the grimy end of the poker when we tried to be public benefactors. I've been there myself. I organized a telephone company once to help a town get decent service. The end of the poker I got was not only dirty, it was hot. But I lived through it and after washing my hands and putting salve on the burn I finally got so I could talk about it rationally.

"I haven't much use for a man who never was licked. He never had a fight. Most of what I've learned in the struggle of life has been pounded in with sledgehammer blows, and it won't come out. I've never rested content with what I've done. Old Alexander and I are alike in that way, I suppose, only he didn't know enough to start some other kind of a contest after he got through conquering the world. He just sat down and blubbered. He didn't know how to do anything but spread desolation with an army. He was brought up wrong. If he'd been through the mill as a boy and had some experience besides wearing a crown and saying 'Sic 'em' to a bunch of corpse makers, he'd have used his big army in farming and gone to inventing machinery to help the chaps plow, till and harvest the crops. Instead of that he went and got drunk like a common person and died of the 'snakes'; and they miscalled him Alexander the Great, when he never did anything that didn't call for brute force and carnage.

"The old cuss ought to have been out in one of the old-time field trials of farm machinery. He'd have known what real war was. I remember up at Fort Wayne in the 'eighties I came off victor with my machine. I didn't

do any Alexander act but I did one about as bad. I made a mistake. I discovered it afterwards and never made the same one again. I was so exuberant over my success that I went up and got a big mourning rosette with black and white streamers ten feet long attached to it. This I hung on the door of my defeated rival. I got one of the finest beatings I ever got in my life, and I've had a few. After I had pondered over the matter I came to the conclusion I deserved it. If the north had rubbed it in after she got through with the south it would have been the climax of cruelty. Old Alec would have rubbed it in and then some.

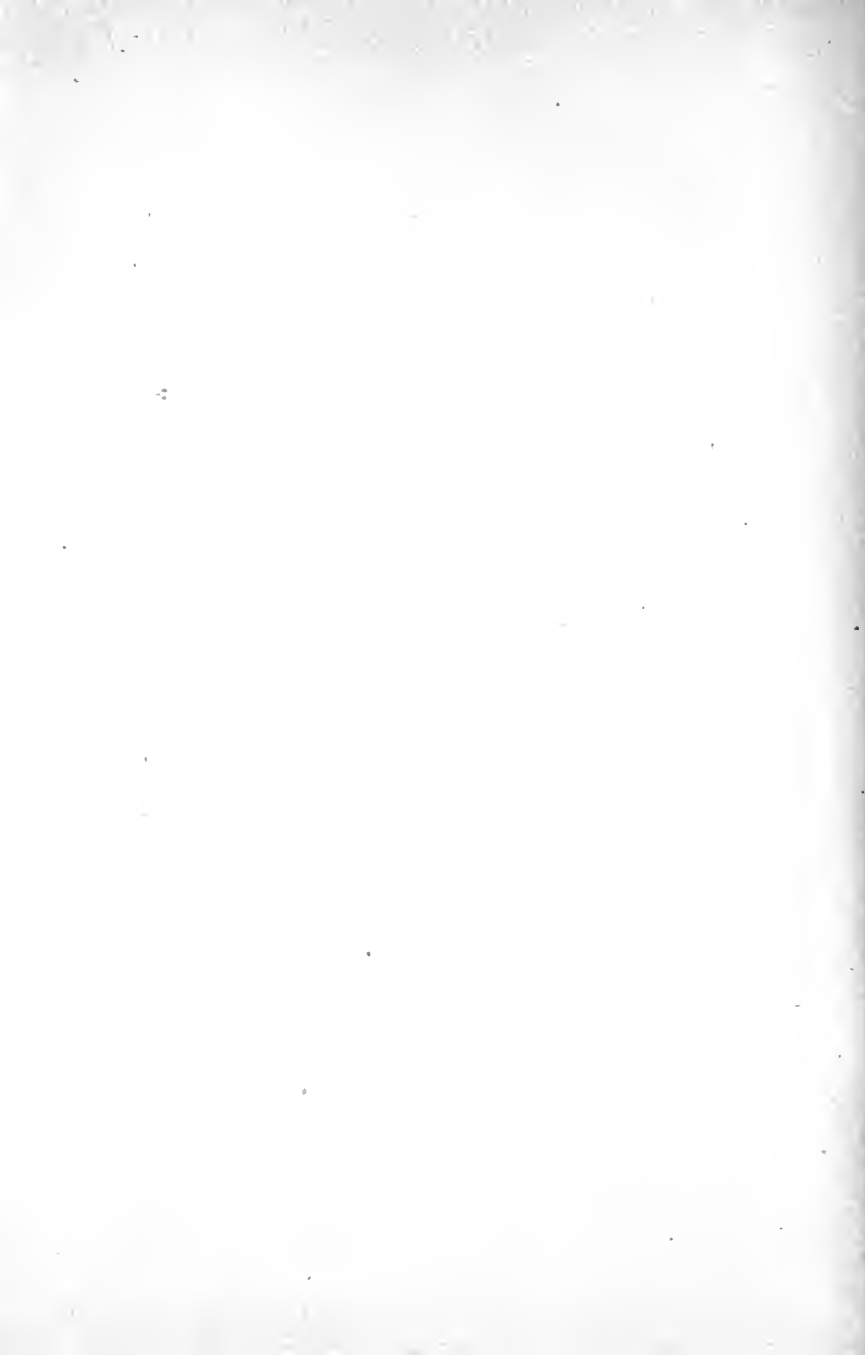
"I lived through that most trying period of this nation's history. I've seen the land north and south drenched in the blood of its brave young men and reunited. I associated with soldiers on both sides. Who but Americans have given such proofs of bravery as that shown on the battlefields of Chickamauga, Stone River, Antietam, and all those other great contests of arms. Think of that memorable charge of Pickett's division, across the wheat fields and up Little Round Top to the stone fence, where it was possible to walk all the way on human beings who had fallen in the charge! Think of the Louisiana Tigers and the New York Zouaves! Think of the untold misery that the war entailed, and realize the price paid 'that this nation should not perish from the earth!'

"The flag on Sumter waves peacefully and triumphantly over a reunited nation. Some who led the chivalrous armies of the south to defeat in '61 to '65 led the armies of the Union to victory in '98, when on land and sea the flower of southern manhood vied with that of the north in deeds of bravery.

"Nearly all the old leaders on both sides, in the Civil War, have heard the last reveille and taps will soon be sounded for all survivors of the conflict. The hand of time has effaced the bitterness of the past. Down in Dixie are my two sisters with age creeping on them, while I am here in the north. By a strange train of

events my home and my heart is with the northern people who were father and mother to me in the days of my wretchedness, while these sisters were privileged to remain with the south, be a part of its sorrow and witness its advance. In every way I can I show these two women, who loved me and prayed for me, that I love them just the same as though years had not separated us, nor my fortunes had not been cast across the once fateful line. In the old cemetery in Arkansaw lie my father and mother and grandfather and grandmother, and my brother and sisters. In the beautiful cemetery at Madison, Wisconsin, sleeps my son whose life was a benediction to me. Near him are two beautiful squares. One contains the remains of the boys in blue, in the other the bodies of the boys in gray who died among the snow drifts of Wisconsin as prisoners of war. The Daughters of the Confederacy presented a fitting monument to the southern boys sleeping there. It was dedicated by Lucius Fairchild Post, Grand Army of the Republic, one beautiful autumn day. Living and dead my ties are north and south and peace reigns. Thank God! Peace reigns!"

THE END.





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